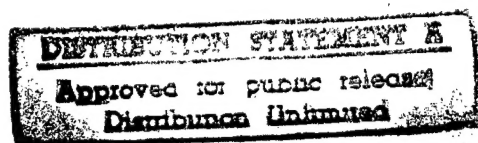


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CONTENTS

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[The following are translations of selected articles from the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL published in Moscow. Refer to the table of contents for a listing of any articles not translated.]

If Defenses are Breached... [P.T. Kunitskiy; pp 3-10]	1
Baltic Republics: 1939 [V.V. Anuchin; pp 11-13]	6
They Stood to the Death [L.M. Sandalov; pp 14-22]	8
A Feat [N.D. Saltykov; pp 23-28]	14
Reflections on Fate of Military Leader [N.G. Pavlenko; pp 29-37]	18
By Strong-Willed Decisions... [N.Ye. Medvedev; pp 38-50]	24
What Actually Happened? [V.M. Galayko; pp 44-49]	31
'Klim, Koba Said...' [O.F. Suvenirov; pp 51-60]	33
Prague and the Military Conspiracy Case [I. Pfaff; pp 61-69]	40
Prisoner of War, Sr Lt Yakov Dzhugashvili [A.N. Kolesnik; pp 70-79]	46
The Age in Autobiographies [pp 80-87]	52
Histories of Regiments of Russian Army [L.V. Belovinskiy; pp 88-90]	58
On Strategem [S.P. Isaykin; p 91]	60
Index of Articles Published in 1988 [pp 92-96]	61
Publication Data	65

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 12, 1988

If Defenses are Breached...

00010005a Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 88 (signed to press
23 Nov 88) pp 3-10

[Article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art," by Maj Gen P.T. Kunitskiy: "If the Defenses Are Breached... (On Restoring the Breached Strategic Defensive Front on the Southwestern Sector)"]

[Text] In the first half of the second year of the Great Patriotic War, the center of the military events on the Soviet-German Front had shifted to its southern wing. In taking advantage of the absence of a second front in Europe, the Nazi Command had concentrated a large grouping of forces here (Army Groups A and B) and on 28 June 1942, in a zone 600 km wide began a general offensive.

Judging from the documents of the German General Staff and statements by prominent military leaders of Nazi Germany, the main goal of this offensive was to finally defeat the Soviet Armed Forces and end the war against the USSR in 1942. Directive No. 41 of 5 April 1942 which sets out the overall plan for the summer offensive stated: "As soon as the weather and terrain conditions permit, the German Command and troops, taking advantage of their superiority, should retake the initiative and impose their will on the enemy. The aim is to finally destroy the personnel still available to the Soviets..."¹ Field Mar von Paulus in his memoirs wrote: "Within the overall limits of the war, the 1942 summer offensive meant an attempt in a new offensive to realize the plans which had collapsed late in the autumn of 1941, mainly: to bring the war in the East to a victorious conclusion, that is, to attain the goals of the attack on Russia generally. In this manner there was a hope for determining the outcome of the war."²

In exploiting the offensive, the Nazi troops by mid-July 1942 had reached the great bend in the Don, they had captured Rostov and had crossed the Don in its lower courses. The breach which had formed (up to 500 km along the front and 150-400 km in depth) was rapidly being widened on the axis of Stalingrad and the Northern Caucasus.

This was the fourth breakthrough of our strategic defensive front³ and put our nation in an exceptionally difficult situation. The reaching of the Volga by the enemy in the Stalingrad area had led to the loss of the last communications linking the central regions of the Soviet Union with the Caucasus. The Baku oil which was so essential for the front and rear was transported by water. The capturing of the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasia by the enemy would deprive us of the Black Sea

Fleet bases and would help establish a direct link-up of the Nazi troops with the Turkish Army, some 26 divisions of which were already deployed on the USSR frontiers.

How could it happen that after the successfully conducted 1941-1942 winter offensive campaign carried out by our Armed Forces as a result of which the enemy had been dealt a serious defeat and had been pushed 150-400 km back from Moscow, the strategic initiative was in enemy hands and the enemy was again able to breach our front? At times, this has been explained by the enemy's superiority in forces but it is impossible to agree with this.

By 28 June 1942, on the Soviet-German Front the enemy had 3 army groups. These included: 11 field armies and 4 tank armies, 3 operations groups including 230 divisions and 16 brigades (a total of 5,655,000 men). They were armed with over 49,000 guns and mortars, 3,700 tanks and assault guns. The air force by that time had approximately 3,200 combat aircraft. The largest enemy grouping had succeeded in deploying on the southern wing of the front, where there was 37 percent of the total number of infantry and cavalry formations and 53 percent of the panzer and motorized formations. This brought together 97 divisions (900,000 men) including 1,200 tanks and assault guns, over 17,000 guns and mortars. They were supported by 1,640 combat aircraft.

Fighting in the ranks of the Soviet Army at the end of June were 5.5 million men. At that time, they had 6,000 tanks, 55,600 guns and mortars and 2,600 aircraft. The enemy forces fighting on the southern wing of the strategic front were opposed by Soviet troops which were approximately the same in terms of the number of personnel and tanks but significantly behind the enemy in the number of aircraft and guns.⁴

The main reason for the breaching of the strategic defensive front was, in our view, the major miscalculation by Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] in planning military operations for the summer of 1942. This was expressed in the initiating of major offensive operations. The Supreme High Command overestimated the successes of the winter offensive and did not consider that the Nazi Army after its defeat had been able to restore its battleworthiness and at that moment possessed significant offensive capability. But the Soviet Armed Forces, regardless of the increased technical equipping and the gained combat experience, at that time did not have the requisite technical superiority over the enemy and was inferior to it in maneuverability. Hq SHC did not listen to the opinion of the General Staff.

Another of the reasons for the breaching of the strategic defensive front can be considered the error of Hq SHC in determining the direction of the main enemy thrust. Why this happened can be explained by the facts given below.

On 18 March 1942, our military intelligence reported to the General Staff: "Preparations for a spring offensive is confirmed by the movements of German troops and materials.... The center of gravity in the spring offensive will be shifted to the southern sector of the front with an auxiliary strike to the north with the simultaneous feint on the central front opposite Moscow...." The conclusion of the report pointed out: "Germany is preparing for a decisive offensive on the Eastern Front which will begin initially on the southern sector...."⁵

On 23 March 1942, the state security bodies informed the State Defense Committee [GKO]: "The main thrust will be launched on the southern sector with the task of breaking through across Rostov to Stalingrad and the Northern Caucasus and from here along an axis to the Caspian Sea. By this route the Germans are hoping to reach the sources of the Caucasian oil. In the event of the successful operation to reach the Volga at Stalingrad, the Germans intend to conduct an offensive to the north along the Volga...."⁶

Hq SHC recognized the possibility of an offensive by the German Army in the south, but at the same time assumed that the enemy which was keeping a large troop grouping in the immediate proximity of Moscow, would most probably launch its main thrust not toward Stalingrad and the Caucasus but rather in the flank of the Soviet Army Central Grouping in the aim of capturing Moscow and the Central Industrial Region.

A major factor in the breaching of the strategic defensive front was the loss of key positions on the Kerch Peninsula and in the Kharkov area. Both sides undertook combat actions for the strategic initiative in the beginning of May 1942. The Nazi Wehrmacht anticipated the Soviet troops in active operations in the Crimea, where on 8 May it went over to an offensive on the Kerch Peninsula against the Crimean Front. On 12 May, the Kharkov Offensive Operation commenced by the troops of the Southwestern Front.

The capture of the Crimea by the Nazi troops sharply altered the situation in the Black Sea Basin and on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front. The enemy grouping fighting on the Caucasus sector escaped from the threat which had been created for its flank and rear by the Soviet troops located in the Crimea. Having occupied the Kerch Peninsula, the enemy acquired the shortest route to the Caucasus, that is, across the Kerch Strait and Taman Peninsula.

The defeat at Kharkov was strongly felt by the troops on the entire southwestern sector. Having eliminated the Barvenkovo Salient, the enemy significantly improved its operational position and took up good initial positions for a further offensive to the east.

Due to these and a number of other factors, the situation on the southwestern sector by the summer of 1942 had grown sharply worse for the Soviet Armed Forces. Again,

as in 1941, they had the task of repairing the breached strategic front. Heavy fighting went on for 6 months on the Caucasus sector. Although the enemy captured the very rich regions of the Don and Kuban, it was unable to achieve its main goal of breaking through into the Transcaucasus and capturing the oil regions of Grozny and Baku. The defensive engagement at Stalingrad lasted almost 4 months. As a result, the Soviet troops thwarted the enemy's plans, caused it enormous losses and forced it at the beginning of November 1942 to go over to the defensive, thereby preparing conditions to go over to a counteroffensive.

It was possible to restore the breached strategic defensive front due to the carrying out of a range of measures of a military-political nature. Let us examine certain of these.

Here of primary significance were the reallocation of forces, the building up of the southwestern sector with strategic reserves and the organizing of new front-level field forces on it.

After the Nazi troops had initiated an offensive on the Voronezh axis and in the Donbass (28 June), Hq SHC realized its error in assessing the situation and quickly began to redistribute efforts along the entire front. Trains carrying troop formations, weapons, ammunition and new equipment began moving from all ends of the nation to the south, to Stalingrad and the Caucasus. During the first 10 days of July, the 1st, 3d, 5th, 6th and 7th Reserve Armies⁷ (the 5th and 7th Armies were already on this sector) were turned here. A rather large troop grouping was established by moving up the reserve armies, a large amount of individual formations and units from the reserve of the Supreme High Command [RVGK] and drafts of reinforcements. On 1 August, this included over 30 percent of the rifle troops and artillery, almost one-half of the tanks and 40 percent of the aviation of the entire operational army.⁸

In the aims of increasing the effectiveness and improving the quality of command over the troops concentrated on the southwestern sector, Hq SHC formed (abolished) various fronts. Thus, on 7 July in the area of the Bryansk Front, two front field forces were organized: the Bryansk Front (commander, Lt Gen N.Ye. Chibisov) including the 3d, 48th and 13th Armies, the 5th Tank Army and the 15th Air Army, and the Voronezh Front (commander, Col Gen V.I. Golikov) and including the 6th, 40th and 60th Armies and the 2d Air Army. The Bryansk Front was given the task of covering Moscow from the southwest and west while the Voronezh Front was to halt the enemy advancing on the Voronezh axis.

Considering the determining independence of the Stalingrad sector and the inability of the Southwestern Front to halt the enemy due to the heavy casualties, Hq SHC on 12 July established a new Stalingrad Front, incorporating in it the 62d, 63d and 64th Armies (from the RVGK) as well as the 21st Combined-Arms Army and the 8th Air Army from the inactivated Southwestern

Front.⁹ For strengthening it, it received the newly constituted 1st and 4th Tank Armies and the surviving units of the 28th, 38th and 57th Armies. The new front was given the task of halting the enemy, preventing it from reaching the Volga and strongly defending the line along the river from Pavlovsk to Kletskaya and then along the line of Kletskaya, Surovikino, Suvorovskiy, Verkhnekurmoyarskaya.

On the Northern Caucasus sector on 28 July, the Southern and Northern Caucasus Fronts were combined into the single Northern Caucasus Front (commander, MSU S.M. Budennyi) with the task of covering the Stavropol and Krasnodar sectors.

In the course of the fierce defensive engagements, by the start of August around Stalingrad, two independent operational axes had clearly been defined: one in the northwest (Vertiyachiy, Kalach) and the other in the southwest (Aksay). Both sectors led directly to Stalingrad. The width of the zone of the Stalingrad Front by this time had grown from 520 km to 800 km and its effective strength had reached 8 armies and this seriously impeded the organization of combat.

In order to ensure firm troop command on the Stalingrad sector, on 5 August Hq SHC adopted a decision to split the Stalingrad Front into two independent fronts: Stalingrad (commander, Lt Gen V.N. Gordov) and Southeastern (commander, Col Gen A.I. Yeremenko). The staffs of both fronts were located in Stalingrad. The Stalingrad Front in operational terms was subordinate to the commander of the Southeastern Front.

The Stalingrad Front received orders to defeat the enemy which had breached the inner defensive perimeter at the boundary of the 62d and 21st Armies, to restore the initial situation there and firmly cover the city from the northwest and west. The task of the Southeastern Front included halting the enemy advance to the southern face of the outer perimeter and prevented the enemy from breaking through and reaching the Volga to the south of Stalingrad.

For supporting the boundary of the Stalingrad and Caucasus sectors, Hq SHC considered it essential as of 15 August to put the Stalingrad Military District (the headquarters was located in Astrakhan) in operational terms subordinate to the commander of the Southeastern Front, having made him responsible for the defense of the Astrakhan sector and the approaches to the Volga on the sector of Stalingrad, Astrakhan.

The intense nature of the fighting around Stalingrad, the great length of the zones of the fronts and the increased number of armies in each of them required the elimination of the unified command of the Stalingrad and Southeastern Fronts which had existed from 9 August. For this reason on 22 September each front was put directly under Hq SHC and at the same time renamed: the Stalingrad became the Don, the Southeastern became

the Stalingrad. Lt Gen K.K. Rokossovskiy was appointed commander of the Don Front. The command and military council of the Stalingrad Front (the former Southeastern) remained with its former personnel.

The elimination of the unified command of the two fronts of the Stalingrad sector conformed to the tasks of the forthcoming counteroffensive the preparations for which had been underway by Hq SHC since mid-September 1942.

The stabilization of the defensive front was also achieved due to the strengthening of troop leadership by Hq SHC as expressed primarily in the sending of its representatives to the front.

Given great powers and having sufficiently high authority, the representatives of Hq SHC carried out its decisions in influencing the course of the engagements, in promptly rectifying mistakes and errors by the front and army commands, they aided and taught in winning against a strong and experienced enemy.

On 23 July, the Chief of the General Staff, Col Gen A.M. Vasilevskiy arrived as the representative of Hq SHC on the Stalingrad Front. "Along with the command of the front," he wrote in his memoirs, "we carefully analyzed the situation. We endeavored not to overlook a single detail, we talked with and sought advice from the commanders and political workers. Everyone was fully determined to defend the city on the Volga. A study of the situation existing on the front showed that the only possibility for eliminating the threat of the encirclement of the 62d Army and the enemy's capturing of the crossings over the Don in the Kalach area and to the north of it consisted in the immediate launching of counterstrikes against the enemy using the available forces of the 1st and 4th Tank Armies."¹⁰

The measures undertaken by Hq SHC, its representatives and the command of the fronts and the armies significantly strengthened the position of the troops but they, as subsequent events were to show, were far from sufficient to completely eliminate the threat hanging over Stalingrad.

An important mobilizing role was also played by the Order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 227 of 28 July 1942 and the appeals to the troops and orders of the front military councils. "Order No. 227 was one of the strongest documents of the wartime years," emphasized MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy, "in terms of the depth of the patriotic content, in terms of the degree of emotional intensity."¹² It set out the harsh truth about the dangerous situation arising on the Soviet-German Front and condemned "retreatist" attitudes.

The order was read and studied in all the companies, batteries, squadrons and other subunits, on the staffs, in the institutions and military schools. PRAVDA, KRASNAYA ZVEZDA and other central as well as all the front and army newspapers devoted editorials to the article. The order inspired the entire army.

The demand of the party "Not One Step to the Rear Without Orders From a Superior Command" became an iron law for each commander, Red Armyman and political worker. The moral effect of the order on the troops was enormous. The outgrowth of this was greater responsibility shown by the Army and Navy personnel for the fate of the motherland.

The appeals to the men and the orders from the front military districts provided a thorough assessment of the existing situation and outlined the specific tasks of the troops. For example, the order of the Military Council of the Stalingrad and Southeastern Front¹³ of 1 September 1942 contained the following appeal: "Sparing no effort and disdaining death do not allow the Germans to reach the Volga and let us not surrender Stalingrad. Each of us should realize that the capturing of Stalingrad by the Germans and their reaching of the Volga will strengthen our enemies and weaken our forces. Not a step to the rear! The military council demands from all soldiers, commanders and political workers, from all the defenders of Stalingrad wholehearted bravery, steadfastness and heroism in the fight against the high-handed enemy. The enemy should be and will be defeated on the approaches to Stalingrad. Forward, to the enemy! Into merciless combat, comrades, for Stalingrad and for the great motherland!"¹⁴

Of important significance in creating good prerequisites for restoring the breached strategic defensive front were **the technical equipping of the Soviet troops and the improving of their organizational structure.** From January through November 1942, the number of mortars in the formations and regiments of the operational army increased by approximately 4-fold, all caliber of weapons by 2.5-fold, tanks (particularly the T-34 and T-70) by 4.4-fold and antitank assault guns by 3-fold.

Increased tank production brought about the growth of the armored troops. In April-May 1942, they began constituting tank and mechanized corps. Then they also began constituting tank armies. In the spring and summer of 1942, they began constituting air armies subordinate to the front commanders. At the same time, they began establishing homogeneous air corps of the RVGK instead of the reserve air groups which had existed until then.

The other reserve units and formations of SHC increased quantitatively and improved qualitatively. In the place of the separate artillery batteries and battalions of varying purpose in the summer of 1942 they began constituting antiaircraft artillery and antitank regiments and in the autumn, artillery breakthrough divisions and the first

artillery breakthrough corps. At the end of 1942, antiaircraft artillery divisions and antitank brigades were being formed as well as units of light, medium and heavy self-propelled artillery and these subsequently were incorporated in the armored troops.

The increased production of weapons, combat equipment and ammunition made it possible to significantly raise the technical equipping of the Soviet Armed Forces and increase their fighting might.

The reinforcing of the old defensive lines and the construction of new ones had a substantial influence on stabilizing the front. At the end of June and the beginning of July, in the zone between the Volga and the Don, they resumed construction commenced in the autumn of 1941 on three Stalingrad defensive perimeters. On 15 July, a decision was taken to build a fourth (city) perimeter some 50 km long along the line of Rynok, Orlovka, Kamennyy Buyerak, Gonchary, Peschanka, Otrada. Hundreds of thousands of local inhabitants and construction specialists took part in this work.

On the Caucasus sector, defensive lines were built between the Don and the Kuban, along the Terek River as well as perimeters around Tikhoretsk, Virishilovsk, Groznyy, Mineralnyye Vody and Krasnodar; the passes over the Main Caucasus Range were reinforced. The highest demands were made on the defensive lines. For example, the Directive of Hq SHC to the Commander of the Transcaucasus Front of 20 August 1942 pointed out: "...The only impassable line is the one which is skillfully prepared for defense and is stubbornly defended..."¹⁵

Counterstrikes, counterpreparations, special army offensive operations and partisan actions played a major role in stabilizing the front. The enemy assigned strong forces to repel the counterstrikes and this led to the weakening of its assault groupings and to a decline in the rate of advance.

On 6 July, the 5th Tank Army (Bryansk Front) launched a counterstrike to the south of Yelets against the flank of Army Group Weiss. This forced the Nazi Command to turn to the north the XXIV Panzer Corps and three infantry divisions advancing toward the Voronezh area and thereby weaken the strike against Voronezh. By active operations the Soviet troops also thwarted the enemy's attempt to broaden the breakthrough to the north of Voronezh along the Don, as significant enemy forces, including the 4th Panzer Army, were drawn into the fighting to parry the blows.

The counterstrike by the 1st and 4th Tank Armies of the Stalingrad Front (25-27 July), although not leading to the defeat of the enemy grouping pushing toward the Don, did, as subsequent events were to show, thwart the enemy's plan to surround and destroy the 62d Army and prevented the enemy from making a rapid rush to capture Stalingrad without a pause. On 23-28 August, the troops on the left wing of the Stalingrad Front (the

63d and 21st Armies, the 1st Guards Army and the 4th Tank Army) launched a counterstrike from the north against the enemy grouping endeavoring to break through on 23 August to the Volga. To the south of Stalingrad, on 29 September, the 57th and 51st Armies by counterstrikes drove the enemy out of the lake defiles and dug in strongly on a favorable line of Satpa—Tsatsa—Barmatsap. Subsequently, this area was employed as a forming-up place for the November counteroffensive by the left wing of the Stalingrad Front.

A new phenomenon under the conditions of fighting in a major city was the conducting of artillery counterpreparation fire against enemy troops preparing to go over to the assault. This was organized on an army scale and was carried out on a narrow front (in the 62d Army on 27 September the sector of counterpreparation fire was 2 km and on 5 October 3 km) for a period of 30-40 minutes. Here the density was 80-150 guns and mortars per kilometer of front. In a number of instances the counterpreparation fire caused significant damage to the enemy, it led to disorder in its battle formations and created conditions for counterstrikes and counterattacks.

In thwarting the enemy plans a major role was played by the local offensive operations conducted by the 63d and 21st Armies in the area to the southwest of Serafimovich on 20-28 August. In the course of these an extensive bridgehead was captured from which a troop grouping from the Southwestern Front went over to the counteroffensive. The Stalingrad defenders were greatly aided by the offensive of the 1st Guards Army, the 24th and 66th Armies to the northwest of Stalingrad (3-15 September).

In the summer and autumn of 1942, when a very threatening situation had developed on the southwestern sector, Hq SHC organized several **offensive operations on the northwestern and western sectors**. Their aim was to attract as many enemy forces as possible and thereby weaken its assault grouping pushing into the Transcaucasus, to the Volga and Stalingrad.

From 30 July through 23 August, the troops on the left wing of the Kalinin Front and the right wing of the Western Front conducted the Rzhev-Sychevka Operation. The active operations of these two front tied down large forces of Army Group Center. Some 12 enemy divisions were shifted into the battle area from other sectors.

The high activeness of the Soviet troops on the western sector created an erroneous notion among the Nazi Command that the Soviet Army was preparing a major offensive on this sector of the front during the winter of 1942-1943. Regardless of the enormous demand for reserves at Stalingrad and the Caucasus, the enemy continued to hold large forces on the central sector of the front.

The restoring of the broken strategic defensive front was also achieved due to **the high steadfastness of the Soviet soldiers, to their courage and unbroken will for victory**. "At times it seemed," wrote MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy, "that for the Soviet troops on the defensive in the city (Stalingrad.—P.K.) such a difficult situation had arisen that it was completely impossible to defend. However, the troops continued the fight with growing heroism. Regardless of the enormous superiority in forces, the enemy did not succeed in breaking the resistance of the unconquered city's defenders. The avalanche of fire and steel which the Nazis unleashed against Stalingrad shattered against the fortress on the Volga the forts and bastions of which were primarily the courage of the Soviet people and their unbreakable will for victory."¹⁶

Each line, each inch of land on the Don and Volga banks and in the foothills of the Main Caucasus Range was taken by the enemy at a price of great losses as a result of which its offensive capabilities were sharply reduced. Unable to carry out the set tasks and having consumed the prepared reserves, Hitler on 14 October 1942 was forced to sign Operations Order No. 1 of the High Command of the Ground Forces for going over to the strategic defensive along the entire Soviet-German Front. This meant, in essence, the collapse of the plans for the Wehrmacht's summer offensive to the east.

The restoring of the breached strategic defensive front on the southwestern sector in 1942 was the severest testing which befell the Soviet Armed Forces and the nation as a whole. This was caused by major strategic errors and mistakes of the superior military-political leadership and these had to be corrected at a price of enormous losses. Months of unbelievably hard struggle were required in order to eliminate the fatal danger which hung over the motherland and to halt the enemy along the banks of the Volga and in the foothills of the Main Caucasus Range.

In the history of the Great Patriotic War the restoring of the breached strategic defensive front is viewed as the greatest achievement of Soviet military art. And this is correct. But we must not overlook those factors which gave rise to such an acute problem. A critical assimilation of combat experience helps in correctly understanding all aspects of war.

Footnotes

1. "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 2, 1963, p 402.
2. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 3, 1960, p 92.
3. The strategic defensive front was breached by the enemy in June 1941 on the Northwestern and Western sectors, in September on the Southwestern and in October on the Western.

4. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 5, 1975, pp 143, 145, 146.

5. Ibid., pp 111, 112.

6. Ibid., p 112.

7. On 7 July, the 7th, 5th and 1st Reserve Armies were renamed, respectively, the 62d, 63d and 64th Armies.

8. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," Vol 5, p 147.

9. Commander of the front, MSU S.K. Timoshenko (on 23 July, he was replaced by Lt Gen V.N. Gordov), military council member N.S. Khrushchev, chief of staff Lt Gen P.I. Bodin.

10. A. Vasilevskiy, "Delo vsey zhizni" [A Cause of One's Entire Life], Moscow, Politizdat, 2d Supplemented Edition, 1975, pp 230, 231.

11. [Not in text]

12. A. Vasilevskiy, op. cit., p 231.

13. During this period the military council of the Stalingrad and Southwestern Fronts was united. Col Gen A.I. Yermenko was simultaneously the commander of both fronts.

14. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 206, inv. 294, file 5/1, sheet 724.

15. Ibid., folio 132a, inv. 2642, file 31, sheets 243, 245.

16. A. Vasilevskiy, op. cit., p 240.

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Baltic Republics: 1939

00010005b Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 88 (signed to press
23 Nov 88) pp 11-13

[Article, published under the heading "From the Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense," by Col V.V. Anuchin, candidate of military sciences: "The Baltic Republics: 1939"]

[Text] The moving up of the Nazi troops to the new lines in the east of Europe represented a major danger to the Baltic countries as the aggressor planned to employ their territories precisely for concentrating forces against the USSR. The Soviet Union, regardless of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Treaty, was not confident that Hitler had abandoned his aggressive plans once and for all. In this regard the need arose to prevent the capture of the Baltic by Germany in the aim of turning the Baltic into a staging area for an attack.

In essence, the war immediately raised questions about the very existence of the Baltic Republics, the peoples of which were threatened by enslavement and annihilation. The Soviet Union, considering the military strategic significance of the given area as well as the vital interests of the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians took measures to strengthen peace and security in the region.

At the end of September and the beginning of October 1939, the Soviet government proposed that the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian governments conclude mutual aid pacts. After the holding of talks, these were concluded, respectively, on 28 September, 5 and 10 October.

The agreeing states promised to provide each other with any sort of aid, including military, in the event of the threat of attack on any of them by any European power. Under these treaties, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia turned over territory to the USSR for the quartering of a certain number of troop formations as well as for establishing several naval bases and the building of a series of airfields. The concluded treaties did not infringe to the slightest degree the rights of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia and in no way touched on the questions of their state and social system. They were "based on principles of equality, noninterference into the internal affairs of one another, mutual respect, independence and sovereignty" ("Istoriya vneshney politiki SSSR" [History of Soviet Foreign Policy], Part 1, p 357). Undoubtedly, these treaties had enormous military-political significance both for the Soviet Union as well as for all the Baltic states. They helped to significantly strengthen the security of all the agreeing sides.

It must be said that the concluding of the pacts was not to the liking of everyone. Not only in the West, but also in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Individual members of the bourgeois governments in these countries endeavored to draw out the talks with the USSR, to sabotage certain articles in the treaties and they endeavored to orient the policy of their powers to the West. Even the disposition of their own troops remained oriented not at a fight in the West, where Hitler ruled, but rather to the east, that is, against the USSR.

An important aspect in the pro-Hitler and anti-Soviet policy among a portion of the ruling circles in the Baltic states was a widespread ideological campaign carried out among the public, in the army, schools and so forth. This was aimed at discrediting the Soviet socialist system and way of life, the peace-loving policy of the USSR, belittling its economic and cultural achievements, the disseminating of lies and slander against those political and social forces in the Baltic and primarily the communist parties and the antifascists who were in favor of the honest and conscientious fulfillment of the mutual aid treaties. As further events were to show, they succeeded poorly here. Among the Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians the revolutionary traditions were too strong and October 1917 was too memorable for them....

And even against the background of this ideological terror by the bourgeoisie against all related to the USSR, the officials in the Baltic countries recognized that the USSR, in unswervingly observing the provisions of the treaties, did not intervene into the internal affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. For example, the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Urbsys in a speech at a congress of the ruling Tautinin Party on 5 January 1940 said: "The troops of the Soviet Union in no way intervene into our internal affairs.... We are in control of our nation just as we were in control prior to the treaty of 10 October; it is also right that from the troops of the Soviet Union up to now we have not experienced any insult, any discrepancy with the provisions of the treaties and hospitality" (LIETUVOUS AIDAS, 5 January 1940).

Below we publish the decree which up to now has been secret. It was addressed to the military. But from this order it can be seen clearly that the Soviet troops could not and did not take any part or apply any pressure on the internal life of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia and that all that occurred at that time in these nations occurred due to the expression of the will of their peoples. The personnel of the Soviet troop units quartered under the treaty on the territory of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia in their daily activities very strictly followed the provisions of the order published here.

Order of the USSR People's Commissar of Defense

No. 0162

25 October 1939

Moscow

Content: On the Conduct of Personnel in the Red Army troop units quartered in Estonia*

On the basis of the Soviet-Estonian Mutual Aid Pact concluded in Moscow on 28 September 1939, the units of the USSR Red Army and Navy have entered Estonian territory and are quartered at places stipulated by the treaty.

The LXV Separate Rifle Corps from now on will be stationed in the territory of the Estonian Republic which is friendly to us as a vanguard screen of the Red Army against possible encroachments by enemies against the Soviet Union or Estonia.

The LXV Separate Rifle Corps will carry out its responsible mission with honor only in the event that the life and daily combat training of the units are carried out in a normal and healthy situation and this is possible only with their complete observance of the points of the mutual aid pact between the USSR and the Estonian Republic.

In the aim of precisely executing the mutual aid pact between the USSR and the Estonian Republic, I order:

1. That the commander of the LXV Separate Rifle Corps, division commander, Comrade Tyurin and the commissar, brigade commissar, Comrade Zhmakin, to take all of the necessary measures so that all the personnel of our units stationed in Estonia, from the rank-and-file Red Armyman to the superior leadership accurately and conscientiously carry out each point of the mutual aid pact and in no instance intervene in the internal affairs of the Estonian Republic.

2. To explain to all the personnel of our units the friendly policy of the Soviet government vis-a-vis Estonia. The mutual aid treaty with Estonia must ensure a lasting peace in the Baltic, the security of Estonia and the Soviet Union. All the personnel of our units should know precisely that under the mutual aid pact our units are to be quartered and will live on the territory of a sovereign state and they do not have the right to intervene into the political affairs and social system of this state.

Various anti-Soviet provocateurs will endeavor and are already endeavoring to depict the entry of our units into Estonia as the start of its "Sovietization." Such and similar attitudes and talks about the "Sovietization" of Estonia are fundamentally contradictory to the policy of our party and government and are undoubtedly provocateur-inspired. The Soviet Union will honestly and scrupulously carry out the mutual aid pact and expects the same from Estonia. Ideas and talks about "Sovietization," were these to occur among servicemen must be fundamentally eliminated and in the future stopped most unmercilessly, for they play only into the hands of the enemies of the Soviet Union and Estonia.

3. I categorically prohibit any meetings of our units, individual servicemen groups of individuals, be they superiors of Red Armymen, from the LXV Separate Rifle Corps with workers and other Estonian organizations or the holding of joint meetings, concerts, receptions and so forth. There is not to be any intervention whatsoever of our people into interparty or any other social affairs of Estonia. Any attempt by a serviceman, regardless of his position, to pretend to be "archleftist" and conduct communist propaganda, even among individuals of the Estonian population, will be viewed as an anti-Soviet act aimed at discrediting the mutual aid treaty with Estonia.

All persons who portray themselves as leftist and ultraleftists and endeavor in any form to intervene into the internal affairs of the Estonian Republic are to be viewed as playing into the hands of the anti-Soviet provocateurs and the evil enemies of socialism and are to be most strictly punished.

4. No conversations are to be held with any Estonian citizens on the life and ways in the Soviet Union or on our Red Army. No information or talks about the Red Army are to be given to the Estonian press.

5. All units of the LXV Separate Rifle Corps will live their own full, ordinary life, in carrying out normal training and leisure. There is to be extensive political work in the further indoctrination of the personnel, well organized, amateur artistic activities, the operation of officer clubs, clubs, Lenin rooms, movies and libraries. The leadership and Red Armymen are to be supplied with the necessary amount of books, musical instruments and orchestras are to be organized in all the units; daily delivery of the central and corps newspapers to the units is to be organized.

6. The morning and evening inspections are to be carefully conducted. There are to be no absences without leave. The duties of the unit duty officer and orderlies are to include an inspection at night to see whether all the personnel of the subunits is present. On each bed there is to be the proper form of inscription giving: last name, first name and patronymic of the soldier as well as the platoon number. The orderlie should have accurate information as to where each Red Armyman and junior commander are.

7. Leaves for the city are to be permitted only after a month of service from the day of arrival in Estonia. During this time the personnel is to be acquainted with the local conditions and habits. The rank-and-file are permitted into the city in groups headed by junior commanders and they are to carry a list of all the soldiers on leave.

8. The commanders and commissars are to be fully aware that the Red Army units are in a foreign land with which we maintain certain treaty relationships and that they are responsible not only for their actions but also for the actions of their subordinates. Being on foreign territory, the units of the LXV Separate Rifle Corps should not only maintain but also constantly raise their moral and political qualities and combat skills, for they are entrusted with the very responsible task of defending the approaches to our motherland. For the indigenous population, the command and rank-and-file personnel of our units should be an example of organization, culture and discipline.

9. The order is to be read in all the companies, batteries, squadrons, detachments, teams and bases located in Estonia. By using commander exercises and political studies for the Red Armymen, it is essential to see to it that all the personnel of the LXV Separate Rifle Corps has a good knowledge and understanding of the order.

USSR People's Commissar of Defense
MSU K. Voroshilov

Footnotes

* Analogous orders were issued to the Red Army troop units stationed in Lithuania and Latvia.

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They Stood to the Death

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[Article, published under the heading "Security Classification Lifted," by Col Gen L.M. Sandalov: "They Stood to the Death"; the article is based on the book of L.M. Sandalov "Voyevyye deystviya voysk 4-y armii v nachal'nyy period Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Combat Actions of the 4th Army in the Initial Period of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1961. This article is a continuation of a series; for the beginning see VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, Nos 10, 11, 1988]

START OF THE WAR AND COMBAT ACTIONS OF 4TH ARMY IN THE BORDER ZONE

Measures to Alert the Troops During the Night of 22 June 1941

[Text] As was pointed out above, in the evening of 21 June, neither the Command of the 4th Army nor the formation and unit commanders nor the soviet and party organizations in Brest Oblast expected a German troop invasion and did not think that this would happen in several hours. For this reason, no measures were taken to alert the troops in the evening of 21 June on the Brest sector.

Two days before, on 19 June, there was an enlarged plenum of the party obkom involving a large number of army political workers. At the plenum, the obkom first secretary Comrade Tupitsin drew attention to the tense international and the growing threat of a war. He urged greater vigilance but at the same time pointed out that there must not be open discussions of this question nor should major measures be carried out which could be spotted by the public. To questions from the plenum participants whether families should be sent from Brest to the east, the obkom secretary replied that this should not be done in order not to cause undesirable reactions.

At the same time, the situation urgently dictated the need to carry out immediate measures to alert the troops, the state, party, social and other organizations in the event of a rapid development of threatening events. The commanders of the 4th Army and the Western Special Military District like the General Staff were informed that 45-47 German divisions were concentrated against our troops located in Western Belorussia. These data corresponded almost completely to the actual number of troops in the German Army Group Center (51 divisions). Moreover, the taking up in recent nights of a forming-up position by these troops for an offensive had not gone unnoticed.

Regardless of the sufficient amount of data on a looming attack by the Nazi armies, the instructions from the people's commissar of defense that the alerting of the

troops would provoke a war and would provide a pretext for Nazi Germany to attack the Soviet Union deprived all levels of command of independence in taking decisions to alert the troops. For this reason, up to 2400 hours on 21 June no measures had been carried out to alert the army troops. There was an analogous picture, obviously, in the state bodies.

At 2400 hours, the army commander and chief of staff, and somewhat later the remaining generals and officers of the army headquarters, were summoned upon orders of the district chief of staff to the army staff. The district staff did not issue any specific instructions except that "everyone was to be on the ready."

The army commander, Maj Gen A.A. Korobkov, under his own responsibility ordered the sending out to all the formations and individual units of the printed "red packets" with instructions on procedures following a combat alert as worked out according to the cover plan of RP-4 [cover area]. These packets had been kept at the army staff and had not been issued to the formation commanders because the decision of the army commander had not yet been approved by the district. However, the formation commanders knew the content of the documents in the packets, as they had participated in compiling them.

At approximately 0200 hours during the night of 22 June, wire communications were broken between the army staff, the district and the troops. Communications was restored only at 0330 hours. The break in the wires was discovered by our signal troops in Zaprudny and Zhabinka.

After restoring contact, the army commander received an order which had been transmitted in open text by telegraph (Baudot) from the commander of the Western Special Military District on alerting the troops. At the same time, orders were given for the 42d Rifle Division in "small units" to be silently removed from the Brest Fortress and the XIV Mechanized Corps was to be alerted; aviation was permitted to relocate to field airfields.

Prior to 0345 hours, the army commander himself personally issued two orders by telephone: to the chief of staff of the 42d Rifle Division to alert the division and to move it out of the fortress to the assembly area; to the commander of the XIV Mechanized Corps to alert the corps.

At 0415 hours-0420 hours, the chief of staff of the 42d Rifle Division reported that the enemy had commenced artillery shelling against Brest. At this very instant they finished receiving the following orders from the district staff:

"To the Army Commander.

"I transmit the order of the people's commissar of defense for immediate execution:

"1. During 22-23 June 1941, there is a possible surprise attack by the Germans on the fronts of the Leningrad, Special Baltic, Special Western, Special Kiev and Odessa Military Districts. The German attack can commence by provocation actions.

"2. The task of our troops is not to respond to any provocation actions which can cause major complications.

"Simultaneously the troops of the Leningrad, Special Baltic, Special Western, Special Kiev and Odessa Military Districts are to be fully alerted to meet a surprise attack by the Germans or their allies.

"3. I order:

"a) During the night of 22 June 1941 to covertly take up the firing positions of the fortified areas on the state frontier;

"b) Before dawn of 22 June 1941 to disperse all aviation to the field airfields, including the organic, having carefully camouflaged it;

"c) All units are to be alerted without additional alerting of the unit-assigned reservists. All measures are to be taken to blacken out the cities and facilities.

"No other measures are to be carried out without special permission."¹

Having received the order, the army commander simultaneously reported to the district commander on the artillery shelling of Brest. Immediately a brief battle order was issued to the 4th Army, No. 01, on alerting them.

The army commander personally transmitted the order by telephone to the commandant of the 62d Fortified Area and to the chiefs of staff of the 42d and 6th Rifle Divisions. The commanders of the XIV Mechanized Corps and the 10th Composite Air Division who had been summoned to the army staff were given this order personally. The commanders of the XXVIII Rifle Corps, the 49th and 75th Rifle Divisions were sent the order by courier.

But the orders and instructions for alerting the troops were late. The war had already commenced, catching the 4th Army unaware.

The Start of Hostilities. Results of the First Enemy Strikes

At 0400 hours, when it was just beginning to get light, artillery fire was suddenly opened from the direction of the Nazi troops. The enemy concentrated the fire against the troop formations and units positioned close to the frontier, against points where there were rifle and combat engineer battalions at work in the fortified area, against the subunits concentrated at the artillery range for a demonstration of equipment as well as against the outposts and posts of the border troops.

The most intense artillery fire was directed against the military camps in Brest and particularly against Brest Fortress which was literally covered with bursting artillery shells. The commander of the 45th German Infantry Division from the XII Army Corps which was to carry out the task of capturing the fortress reported to his command that the artillery fire plan was designed to stun. The strongest artillery and mortar fire was directed against the fortress citadel. In addition to the divisional artillery of the 45th Infantry Division for artillery softening up, the enemy used nine light batteries and three heavy batteries, a battery of high-power artillery and a mortar battalion. In addition, the commander of the XII Army Corps concentrated against the fortress the fire of two mortar battalions from the 34th and 31st Infantry Divisions.²

Massed artillery fire was directed for an hour against the military compound to the south of Brest, where the 22d Tank Division was located and the northern military compound in Brest where were located a corps artillery regiment and certain units from the rifle divisions of the XXVIII Corps. The Germans raised observation balloons for correcting the artillery fire on the sector of Vlodava, Semyatichi.

Simultaneously with the artillery softening up, German aviation conducted a series of massed strikes against the airfields of the 10th Composite Air Division. As a result of these strikes, almost all the aircraft were burned out from the ground attack air regiment in the region of Vysokoye and 75 percent of the equipment of the fighter air regiment at the airfield in Pruzhany along with all the airfield equipment. Subsequently, the surviving aircraft were organized in a single squadron under the command of the regiment's commander. Only 10 aircraft remained in working order in the fighter regiment based at Imenin Airfield (in the area of Kobrin).

As was later learned, during the first hours of the war, the air divisions of the other district armies suffered the same damage from German air strikes.

The order to withdraw from the fortress on the part of the units of the 42d Rifle Division issued personally by the commander of the 4th Army, Maj Gen A.A. Korobkov, to the divisional chief of staff over the telephone during the period from 0330 hours to 0345 hours could not be carried out before the start of military operations. The chief of staff of this division, Maj V.L. Shcherbakov, had scarcely assembled the unit commander for issuing them their orders when the enemy artillery softening up commenced. The division's commander, Maj I.S. Lazarenko, could not be found and informed of the received order.³ The order for alerting the divisions of the XIV Mechanized Corps as issued at 0330 hours also had not been transmitted to the units before the start of the enemy artillery softening up.⁴

Consequently, it was impossible to carry out even the preliminarily issued orders to alert the units of the 4th Army.

The combat alert in the border formations was given independently by the formation and unit commanders after the start of the enemy artillery softening up and in the formations of the XIV Mechanized Corps upon orders from the district after 0430 hours.

During the period from 0500 to 0600 hours, the enemy launched massed air strikes against the staffs and dumps. The first to be attacked were the staffs of the following corps: the XIV Mechanized in Kobrin and the XXVIII Rifle in Zhabinka.

The staff of the XIV Mechanized Corps, in suffering losses in personnel and particularly communications equipment, moved to the command post which had been prepared in the woods to the north of Tevla. The staff of the XXVIII Rifle Corps did not have major casualties and continued to remain in the Zhabinka area. The enemy aviation set fire to a major oil depot which was not far from the command post of this corps.

German aviation launched the first raid against the army staff at 0510 hours. At around 0600 hours, the raid was repeated. In addition to the army staff in Kobrin an attack was made against the staff of the 10th Air Division and the residents of the leadership of the army headquarters and air division. Losses in personnel were slight but on the other hand the staffs lost virtually all their communications equipment. All the documents of these staffs remained under the ruins of the buildings. Only the communications center of the army staff survived as this was located in the basement. During these hours enemy aviation destroyed the district artillery dump in Bronna Gura.

During the period from 0500 to 0600 hours with artillery support and under an air cover, the 2d German Panzer Group and the 4th Army began crossing the Western Bug River. The enemy launched the main thrust on the sector of Yanuw-Podlyaski, Slavatyche, that is, in virtually the entire army area with the forces of the XLVII Motorized, the XII Army and the XXIV Motorized Corps.

The 17th and 18th Panzer Divisions of the XLVII Motorized Corps crossed the Western Bug on the sector of Zachopki, Mokrany and, without encountering great resistance from the subunits of the 6th Rifle Division and the units which were engaged in building the fortified region and were stunned by the artillery fire began to exploit the offensive on the axes of Lyschitsy and Motykaly.

The 3d and 4th Panzer and the 1st Artillery Divisions of the XXIV Motorized Corps by 0700 hours crossed the Western Bug on the sector of Koden, Domachovo. Here the river depth in places did not exceed 1 m and this

made it easier for the German troops to cross it. Moreover, a portion of the German tanks had been specially adapted for crossing water obstacles. The 3d Panzer Division completely used the captured in-tact bridge across the river at Koden for the crossing of the tanks. The strike of the XXIV German Corps was taken initially by the subunits moved up to the frontier for defensive work and then against the positions of units of the LXXV Rifle Division in Mednaya and Chersk. The order for the alert was received by the division's commander, Maj Gen S.I. Nedvigin, after 0400 hours. For this reason he had not issued any preliminary orders to the regiments. The regiments, in suffering great losses from enemy artillery fire and aviation, entered battle unprepared.⁵

The main forces of the 3d Panzer Division carried out the offensive to the northeast around Brest to the southeast.

The enemy XII Army Corps, in making up the center of the assault grouping, went over to an offensive against Brest. After an hour of artillery softening up, the 34th Infantry Division began crossing the Western Bug to the south of Brest, the 31st to the north of Brest and the 45th Infantry Division in the area of the fortress.

During the artillery softening up, the 34th German Infantry Division caused heavy losses to our 22d Tank Division which was located in the southern military compound of Brest some 2.5-3.5 km from the state frontier. This compound was on level terrain and could be clearly seen by the enemy. The artillery fire against the compound and the ensuing air strikes were a surprise for the division as for the remaining troops. A large number of personnel and family members of the command was killed or wounded. The clustered position of the division's units contributed to this. The Red Armymen were quartered in dormitories, they slept in 3-4-tier bunks, while the officers with their families lived in officer housing close to the rank-and-file barracks. The division also lost from the air and artillery strikes a large number of tanks, artillery and motor vehicles and over one-half of all the tank trucks, shops and kitchens. The division's artillery dump and fuels and lubricant dump were set afire by enemy fire and then blew up.

With the start of the artillery shelling, the division's commander, Maj Gen V.P. Puganov, upon the permission of the chief of staff of the XIV Mechanized Corps, Col I.V. Tutarinov, who happened to be in the division, declared a combat alert and ordered the units to prepare to move to the area of Zhabinka which had been designated under the cover plan. The unit commanders, as soon as the enemy artillery fire began to abate, began to assemble the men, tanks and motor vehicles. The duty motorized and tank units were rushed toward the Bug River to support the assembly of the division.

From 0600 to 0800 hours, the units of the 22d Tank Division under enemy fire in disorder crossed the Mukhavets River over bridges to the southeast of Brest and at Pugachevo, endeavoring as quickly as possible to reach the Zhabinka area over the Warsaw Highway and by the dirt road to the north of the railroad. Those subunits of the division which did not have tanks and were without motor vehicles, under the command of the division's deputy commander, Col I.V. Konnov, traveled via Pugachevo to Radvanichi, planning to turn from Radvanichi to the north toward Zhabinka. These were subunits from the motorized rifle and artillery regiments, dismounted subunits of the tank regiments as well as individual units and rear subunits of the division. Their personnel moved to Radvanichi on foot and many of the soldiers from the newly called up did not have weapons. A significant portion of the division's artillery had been destroyed by enemy fire or due to the absence of tractors had been left in the parks. Officer families also retreated along with the servicemen to Radvanichi.

During the first hours of the war, among the killed were the Deputy Commander of the 22d Tank Division for Political Affairs, Reg Commissar A.A. Illarionov, the Deputy Divisional Commander for Technical Affairs, Mil Engr 2d Rank Ye.G. Chertov and the Commander of the 44th Tank Regiment, Maj N.D. Kvass was severely wounded.

By the surprise artillery fire, two batteries and a larger portion of the motor transport were destroyed of the 204th Howitzer Regiment of the 6th Rifle Division located between the southern military compound of Brest and the artillery firing range.

Significant losses were also suffered by the units and subunits which had been assembled under the district order at the artillery firing range for conducting an experimental exercise. Here were two battalions of the 84th Rifle Regiment of the 6th Rifle Division, subunits of the 459th Rifle and 472d Artillery Regiments of the 42d Rifle Division, tank, artillery and other equipment assigned for demonstration to the exercise participants as well as the 455th Corps Artillery Regiment assigned for conducting the planned firing.

The start of the enemy artillery firing was seen by these troops as the unexpected start of an exercise with field firing and the fact that the shells began exploding in their positions was put to negligence on the part of the exercise leadership and in order to draw attention to the "mistake" which had occurred, they sent off signals from the artillery range: light (by rocket) and sound (trumpets). And only when the units had already suffered heavy losses did the commanders and troops realize that a war had started. After this a portion of the subunits from the 6th Rifle Division joined the 75th Rifle Division and the remainder began to retreat together with the dismounted subunits of the 22d Tank Corps to Radvanichi. The subunits of the 459th Rifle and 472d Artillery Regiments rejoined their division in the Zhabinka area.

The 204th Howitzer Regiment, one battalion of which had horse-drawn traction and two had mechanical, upon the battle alert moved out of its compound with 33 weapons.⁶ However, only several batteries succeeded in crossing the Mukhavets River in order, as was planned under the cover plan, together with the 84th Rifle Regiment from the division to defend the Brest area, since the bridges across the river were occupied by the crossing 22d Tank Division. In waiting for an opportunity to cross the river, the regiment suffered great casualties from enemy aviation. Having lost any hope of crossing the Mukhavets, the regiment's commander turned his unit toward Radvanichi. Thus, neither the 84th Rifle nor the 204th Howitzer Regiments trained before the war to defend the Brest area could participate in this. Considering that the 3d Battalion of the 84th Regiment was in the fortress, the commander of this regiment had only the regimental school, the remnants of the regimental artillery and other of the regiment's subunits to defend the city.

With the departure of the 22d Tank Division from Brest, the city was virtually undefended. The commander of the 6th Rifle Division at this time assembled the remnants of the 125th, 333d Rifle and 131st Artillery Regiments to the north and northeast of Brest. Moreover, these regiments according to the plan were not assigned for the defense of Brest but rather should defend other regions. For this reason, the 45th German Infantry Division, having crossed the Western Bug to the south and north of the fortress and encountering only insignificant resistance by our troops on the flanks, gradually occupied the city. A detachment from the division on assault boats made its way along the Mukhavets river to the bridges to the south and southeast of Brest and captured them intact.

However, the 45th German Infantry Division was unable to capture the Brest Fortress without a halt. After several attempts to capture the fortress, the division had suffered heavy losses and the offensive against it was broken off. The defenders of the fortress by their fire also thwarted German attempts to organize a crossing by the groups over the Western Bug using the railroad bridges.

What was the Brest Fortress which turned out to be a trap and at the outset of the war played a fatal role for the troops of the XXVIII Rifle Corps and the entire 4th Army?

The inner core of the fortress was its citadel located on an island skirted on the southwest by the Western Bug and to the south and north by channels of the Mukhavets River. A brick two-story barracks with 500 chambers for the quartering of troops was the citadel's ring wall. Beneath the chambers were storage facilities and even lower down a network of underground passages. Two gates in the form of deep tunnels connected the citadel with bridges over the Mukhavets River and these ran to the bastions of the fortress. A third gate led to a bridge over the main channel of the Western Bug. A ring of

bastions with fortification works, barracks and dumps was the external cover of the citadel. On the outside of this ring for more than 6 km ran a massive earthen embankment some 10 m high and this was the outer wall of the entire fortress. The earthen embankment was girdled by channels of the Western Bug and Mukhavets as well as by channels and broad ditches filled with water. The system of the river channels and canals in the ring of bastions formed three islands—Pogranichnyy [border], Gospitalnyy [hospital] and Severnyy [northern]. Several kilometers from the earthen embankment of the fortress ran a ring of forts a significant portion of which was employed for the quartering of troops and for dumps.

At the moment the enemy opened artillery fire against Brest and the Brest Fortress the following units and subunits were in its citadel: the 84th Rifle Regiment minus two battalions, the 125th Rifle Regiment minus one battalion and a combat engineer company, the 333d Rifle Regiment minus one battalion and a combat engineer company, the 131st Rifle Regiment, the 75th Separate Reconnaissance Battalion, the 98th Separate Anti-tank Battalion, a staff battery, the 37th Separate Signals Battalion, the 31st Motor Battalion and rear subunits of the 6th Rifle Division, the 44th Rifle Regiment minus two battalions (at a fort 2 km to the south of the fortress), the 455th Rifle Regiment minus one battalion and a combat engineer company (one battalion of those remaining in the fortress was quartered in a fort 4 km to the northwest of Brest), the 158th Motor Battalion and the rear subunits of the 42d Rifle Division. Also in the fortress were the staff of the 33d District Engineer Regiment with the regimental subunits, one-half of the district military hospital on Gospitalnyy Island and a border detachment on Pogranichnyy Island. Moreover, living in the bastion ring and beyond the fortress walls was a large number of command personnel and career personnel with their families as well as citizens employed in the units and facilities located in the fortress.⁷

As a result of the suddenly opened Nazi artillery fire and air raids, the units of the fortress garrison caught by surprise suffered heavy losses in killed and wounded. There were particularly heavy casualties in the units and subunits located in the central part of the fortress (citadel).

For escaping from the fortress to the east it was possible to use only the northern gates, and the enemy had concentrated the heaviest artillery fire against them. For this reason only individual subunits were able to escape from the citadel and these were unable to carry with them any materiel. Even the reconnaissance battalion of the 6th Rifle Division was unable to break out and this subunit was armed with light tanks and armored vehicles.

In a brief battle report on the actions of the 6th Rifle Division, the start of the fighting for the fortress was described as follows:

"At 0400 hours in the morning of 22 June, heavy firing was opened against the barracks, against the exits from the barracks into the central part of the fortress, against the bridges and entry gates and residences of the command. This shelling caused confusion and panic among the Red Army personnel. The command personnel who came under attack in their quarters was partially destroyed. The surviving commanders were unable to reach the barracks due to the heavy barrage fire set up against the bridge in the central part of the fortress and against the entry gates. As a result, the Red Armymen and junior commanders without command on the part of the middle-level commanders, dressed and undressed, in groups and alone, streamed out of the fortress, crossing the moat, the Mukhavets River and the embankment of the fortress under artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. It was impossible to count the losses, as the scattered units of the 6th Division were mixed with scattered units of the 42d Division and many were unable to reach the assembly area because at approximately 0600 hours artillery fire was concentrated against it."⁸

With the start of the enemy artillery softening up at 0400 hours lights were put out in the city and the fortress and it was still rather dark. Telephone contact with the city was broken. This further intensified the confusion of the personnel. There were only isolated middle-level commanders in the battalions. The commanders who had been able to make their way to the fortress were unable to lead the units and subunits out and remained in the fortress. Thus, for example, the commander of the 44th Rifle Regiment of the 42d Rifle Division, Maj P.M. Gavrilov, who during the first hour of the artillery shelling has made his way to his regiment, was unable to lead its remnants out of the fortress and remained on the spot, heading the defense of the eastern sector of the fortress. According to the recollections of Comrade Gavrilov, all the exits from the fortress bastion ring were under such heavy artillery, mortar and later machine gun fire that the 98th Separate Antitank Battalion in attempting to break out of the fortress was almost completely destroyed.

Consequently, a large number of personnel from the units of the 6th and 42d Rifle Divisions remained in the fortress not because they had the task of defending the fortress but because they could not escape from it.

The artillery located in the open artillery parks of the fortress was largely destroyed by enemy fire on the spot. Almost totally destroyed were the horses of the artillery and mortar units and subunits of the divisions in the fortress courtyard at the horse lines. The motor vehicles of the motor battalions and other units of both divisions, in standing in combined open motor parks, were burned up. All the documents and property of the units remained in the fortress.

The Deputy Commander for Political Affairs of the 6th Rifle Division, Reg Commissar M.N. Butin, reported on the results of the Nazi artillery shelling of the Brest Fortress and the conditions for the departure of the units upon the alert as follows:

"After the artillery shelling carried out at 0400 hours on 22 June 1941, the units were unable to depart compactly for the concentration area. The men arrived individually and half-dressed. A maximum of two battalions could be mustered from those who assembled. The first fighting was carried out under the leadership of the regimental commanders, Comrades Dorodnykh (84th Rifle Regiment), Metveyev (333d Rifle Regiment) and Kovtunenکو (125th Rifle Regiment).

It was impossible to remove the artillery equipment of the rifle regiments as everything has been destroyed in place. The 131st Rifle Regiment removed eight weapons of the 2d Battalion and one weapon of the regimental school. The personnel, equipment and horses of the 1st Battalion which was in the fortress were destroyed."

The emergency reserves of the units which were at the fortress dumps were completely destroyed in place.

Units from the XXVIII Rifle Corps which were quartered in the northern camp (on the northern edge of Brest) suffered significantly fewer losses. The 17th Howitzer Regiment of the 42d Rifle Division was withdrawn from the camp in a strength of two battalions and the 447th Corps Artillery Regiment removed 17 guns with a small amount of ammunition while the remaining ammunition concentrated in the regiment's artillery park was destroyed by enemy artillery fire.⁹

By 0700 hours, the units of the 45th and 34th Infantry Divisions of the XII German Army Corps took Brest. The fortress remained in Soviet hands and its defenders proved themselves to be true patriots of the motherland and they fought the enemy to their last breath, covering the colors of their units with undying glory.

After the first artillery and air strikes, they began evacuating from Brest the party and soviet organizations, the management bodies of the Brest Railroad Junction, the factories, shops, warehouses and other enterprises, organizations and institutions. This was carried out in terrible confusion, hurriedly, and hence in a disorganized manner. There began a mass departure to the east of the families of soviet and party workers, serviceman families and the entire population which did not wish to live under Nazi authority.

On the right wing of the 4th Army, events developed in the same sequence as in the other sectors of the front. The enemy strikes were a surprise; stunned and confused our troops suffered heavy losses in men and equipment.

To the northwest of Zhabinka in the army zone, after artillery softening up, the divisions of the XLIII and IX Army Corps of the 4th German Field Army began crossing the Western Bug River. On the frontier they were met only by subunits from the rifle divisions involved in defensive work as well as to machine gun-artillery battalions of the Brest Fortified Area. By 0700 hours, the enemy divisions had advanced from 3 to 5 km

to the east, with the exception of the area of Semyatich Station and the Orel area which were held by the 16th and 17th Machine Gun-Artillery Battalions occupying completed and equipped permanent emplacements in these areas. To the north of Nemiruv the 134th and 252d German Infantry Divisions were engaged by the 15th Rifle Regiment of the 49th Rifle Division which had already suffered heavily from enemy artillery fire and in the area of Semyatich and to the west of it, by the 772d Rifle Regiment of the 113th Rifle Division.

This briefly was the picture of the start of military operations in the zone of the 4th Army and the results of the enemy surprise air and artillery strikes during the first hours of the war.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 208, inv. 2454, file 26, sheet 69.
2. The report of the commander of the 45th Enemy Infantry Division among other documents was captured in March 1942 by the troops of the Bryansk Front.
3. From the memoirs of the former commander of the 44th Rifle Regiment, Maj P.M. Gavrilov.
4. From the memoirs of the former chief of staff of the 22d Tank Division, Lt Col I.S. Kislitsyn.
5. From a report by the former commander of the 75th Rifle Division, Maj Gen S.I. Nedvigin.
6. From the report by the deputy commander of the 6th Rifle Division.
7. TsAMO, folio 318, inv. 4631, file 8, sheets 2-3.
8. Ibid., folio 202, inv. 5, file 65, sheets 98-107.
9. Ibid., folio 318, inv. 4631, file 8, sheet 5.

(To be continued)

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A Feat

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[Article, published under the heading "Veterans Recall," by Maj Gen N.D. Saltykov, candidate of military sciences: "A Feat (The Core of Officers Who Were Representatives of the General Staff in the Great Patriotic War)"]

[Text] The rapidly changing situation during the first months of the war greatly complicated the activities of Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] in the area of troop command and control. Information from the troop staffs was received irregularly by the General Staff and with a great delay. They began to seek out a solution to the arising problems.

On 28 July 1941, for this purpose the State Defense Committee [GKO] adopted a decision to establish a group of General Staff officers with the rights of a section. The plan was to have 2 officers on a front, 3 in an army, 2 in a division with a total of 1,124 men. Of these, 22 were to comprise the personnel of the group, 24 were on the fronts, 150 under the armies and 928 under the divisions.¹ At the beginning of September the first three candidates were selected from students of the second and third years at the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze. On the 13th they were appointed officers of the General Staff under the rifle divisions and soon were dispatched to the operational army. On 20 September, Capt N.V. Reznikov and Sr Lt N.D. Saltykov (the author of these lines) flew to the 38th Army of the Southwestern Front, while on the 25th Capt A.I. Kabanov traveled to the 16th Army, Capt V.I. Chuvelev to the 20th Army and Capt D.V. Medvedev to the 50th Rifle Division.²

At the end of September, the enemy began the operation to capture Moscow. On 2 October 1941, the main forces of Army Group Center went over to an offensive against the troops of the Western and Reserve Fronts. In this difficult situation certain of our formations were encircled. Capt A.I. Kabanov, having returned from the 16th Army, on 5 October flew off with a new assignment to the 19th Army which had been surrounded at Vyazma and did not return to the General Staff.³

The officers worked on many sectors. In October and November in the armies of the Northwestern Front there were: Capt M.A. Tekhneryadov in the 11th Army, Sr Lt A.D. Gerasimenko in the 27th. On the Southwestern Front there were: Capt A.D. Rabota in the 6th Army and Capt Kh.N. Poleshchuk in the 40th. On the Leningrad sector in the Volkhov area there was an operations group working from the General Staff consisting of 4 men. Every day from each of these officers the General Staff received a report.

The establishing of a group of General Staff officers was a reliable source of information from the operational army. The representatives of the General Staff correctly depicted the situation on the various sectors of the front and their data did not require reverification. The command gained an opportunity, in comparing the content of the reports from the officers and from the troop staffs, to thoroughly analyze the situation developing on the various sectors of the front and take decisions corresponding to it.

In summing up the work results of the group of General Staff officers over the 3 months of their existence, the Commissar of the General Staff F.Ye. Bokov wrote: "The group has done great work in strengthening the constant, direct and vital link of the General Staff with the troops and staffs of the operational army, in providing the General Staff with continuous, prompt and accurate information about the situation and in the carrying out by the troops of the directives, orders and instructions of the Supreme High Command and General Staff."⁴

The group was used particularly widely during the preparations for and at the start of the Soviet troop counter-offensive at Moscow. The tasks for the officers were usually given personally by the chief of the General Staff, MSU B.M. Shaposhnikov, the Commissar F.Ye. Bokov, the Chief of the Operations Directorate, Maj Gen A.M. Vasilevskiy and his deputies. The officers were sent to the front in airplanes, on motor vehicles, motorcycles and sometimes on tanks and located the lost units, formations or staffs, studied the situation, the state of the troops, their capabilities and needs, they helped establish contact with the superior staffs, and turned over to subordinates orders with a new or adjusted battle task. Certain officers traveled to those sectors where the committing of fresh forces was planned. They presented the formation commanders with orders and by map and then in the field clarified the lines and the times of commitment.

On 6 December 1941, out of the 80 General Staff officers, around 60 were in the troops of the Western, Kalinin and Southwestern Fronts. They reported to the General Staff on what they personally observed. For example, Capt I.V. Gilev and Sr Lt A.K. Kravtsov reported that ahead of the 20th Army the enemy was retreating, it was being pursued poorly and reconnaissance was poorly organized.⁵ In the morning of 15 December, the General Staff officer under the 10th Army, Capt D.D. Gradusov, informed B.M. Shaposhnikov that the 326th Rifle Division, in advancing to the west with the task of capturing the Tula—Pavlovsk—Orel Highway was without fuel, ammunition and food. "This must be delivered by aircraft. I will provide for the landing and unloading,"⁶ he concluded his report.

On 17 December, Capt A.L. Kuzminykh who was in the 21st Army reported to the General Staff on facts of false information from its military council and staff. A similar

instance occurred in the 29th Army and Capt G.B. Balter gave the alert about this. As a result, on behalf of Hq SHC a directive was sent to the troops from the General Staff demanding a decisive struggle against elements of deception and lies in reports.⁷

It is essential to point out that at that time no document had been worked out on the legal status of the General Staff officers. The officers sent to the field forces and formations were given an identification stating that they were representatives of the General Staff. Only on 11 February 1942 were a regulation and instructions approved. In the same month, these were sent out to the troops of the field forces.

Considering that in the summer of 1942 the main events might develop on the western sector, Headquarters reinforce the Western and Bryansk Fronts. General Staff officers were correspondingly allocated here. On 20 May, of the 185 officers of the group, around 70 were on the southwestern sector, where the Nazi Command was preparing to launch a decisive thrust. In May-June 1942, the enemy succeeded in defeating the Soviet groupings in the Crimea and at Kharkov and to create favorable conditions for an offensive by Army Group A to the Caucasus and by Army Group B to Stalingrad. At the end of July, fierce fighting developed on the Don steppes. The General Staff officers reported on the crisis situation in the zones of the armies and fronts. Thus, the senior officer, Col I.F. Kuzmichev on 23 July informed the General Staff: "The troops of the Southern Front, with the exception of the 56th Army, are disorganized, they are commanded by no one and are retreating in various directions to the south. The front's staff is concentrated at Mechetinskaya Village and is incapable over the next 10-15 days of commanding the troops and bringing the retreating units to order."⁸

An additional contingent of General Staff officers was sent to the troops fighting on the Stalingrad sector. By 6 August there were 26 men on the Stalingrad and South-eastern Fronts. They regularly informed Moscow about the combat actions. The senior officer under the XXIII Tank Corps, Maj V.V. Koshelev, reported that the command of the 1st Tank Army frequently changed the task for the corps, as a result of which the 99th Tank Brigade used up 350 km of travel time before entering battle. The corps was fighting without cooperation with the infantry and was committed to battle piecemeal.⁹ In September, substantial flaws in employing the tanks were discovered by the General Staff officers under the 24th Army, Col N.F. Garnich. The army had 8 separate tank brigades which were used in the battle formations of the rifle divisions. In the course of the fighting, the brigades lost virtually all the tanks and the 241st, 167th and 114th were destroyed. Reports on the incorrect employment of tanks in combat continued to be received from other officers. Subsequently, these were the basis for the orders of the people's commissar of defense No. 325 of 16 October 1942 "On the Employment of Tank Troops on the Offensive."

In the summer and autumn of 1942, the group of General Staff officers was continuously added to. By 10 December, this numbered 240 men. The flow of information from the officers from the field forces constantly increased because of this. The leadership of the group could not handle the processing and analysis of the incoming reports. In order to escape from the developing situation, they decided to restructure the group, having formed in it sectors which combined two or three fronts. This somewhat improved the work.

The activities of the General Staff officers in the field forces were extremely diverse. They delved literally into everything: along with important operational questions concerning the preparation and conduct of operations, they also investigated such specific ones as, for example, Soviet air operations. While serving as a senior officer under the 9th Army of the Transcaucasian Front, in November-December 1942, I happened to observe air battles. In my report to the General Staff, I recommended "to require that the ground attack planes come down as low as possible in attacking ground targets, repeating the runs several times," and wrote that "the fighter aviation must master the techniques of two-element flights and dependably cover the ground attack and bomber aviation in the air" and that "by the time of the reconnaissance and the organization of cooperation on the spot, the commanders of companies, batteries and higher should have aerial photographs of the enemy defenses on those sectors where they are to advance." In my conclusions I pointed out: "Only under these conditions can the tasks be given correctly to the weapons." In the report a recommendation appeared: T. Glushchenko. An important report. Send it out to Comrades Vechnyy and Ivanov of the Air Forces. 28 December 1942. Dubinin."¹⁰

The General Staff officers who were in the field forces and formations participated in many engagements. Many of them carried out feats, they were killed or were missing in action in the fighting for the Crimea, at Kharkov, in Stalingrad and the Caucasus. Capt A.I. Gribkov, the officer under the II Mechanized Corps on 13 December 1942 provided information to the General Staff on his extremely difficult situation: at 1200 hours the enemy began an offensive on all sides. We were ordered to hold out until tomorrow. We have put everything possible into formation. The food, the horses.... We will fight until the last but will not surrender the equipment."¹¹ Upon orders from Army Gen G.K. Zhukov, the core which had suffered heavy losses began to pull out of the encirclement. Covered by tanks, the infantry with the artillery reached our own troops. For this fighting, A.I. Gribkov was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

The following case comes to mind. The 9th Army of the Transcaucasus Front was given the task of breaching the enemy defenses on the line of the Ardon River. At the end of November 1942, the offensive had not been

successful. On 4 December it was resumed. On 5 December, by observation I established that the infantry did not rise to the attack and spent the entire day in its positions. In order to ascertain that the same thing was prevalent in the entire army zone, on 6 December, four General Staff officers from the observation posts spent the entire day observing the actions of the formations in the three advancing corps. It was established that after the artillery softening up the infantry hit the dirt and did not go over to the assault, and did not even carry out a fire fight. Having generalized the data of the observation, I dispatched a telegram to the General Staff, having first received approval from the army commander.¹² Maj Gen K.A. Korteyev proposed that I speak at a session of the army military council where the commanders of the rifle corps were to report on the course of the offensive. Some time later, upon the demand of Headquarters, measures were carried out in the troops aimed at improving the preparation and conduct of offensive operations.

In the spring of 1943, the situation on the Soviet-German Front had changed. The need arose for reorganizing the group of General Staff officers as this, existing autonomously within the organization, had become a transmission belt of materials set out in the reports and briefs of the officers. At the end of June, the group was abolished. Its officers who were in the troops were brought together into a special corps of officers, representatives of the General Staff, and this in organizational terms was part of the operations directorate. Under each staff of a front they set up a group of officers (five-seven men) headed by a senior officer. This was under the chief of the corresponding sector. The senior officer was the deputy of the latter. He was to be constantly on the front. For supporting the official activities of the General Staff representatives, 73 passenger cars were additionally incorporated in the TOE of the individual staff motor vehicle companies of the front field headquarters.

On 19 December 1943, the Chief of the General Staff, Mar A.M. Vasilevskiy, approved a new "Regulation and Instructions on the Work of the Corps of Officers Who Are Representatives of the Red Army General Staff" and these, in contrast to the previous ones, set out the rights and duties of the officers starting from monitoring the directives and orders of Headquarters and the General Staff. A new section had also appeared "Duties of the Command and Staffs to Support the Work of the Officers Who Are Representatives of the Red Army General Staff."

In April 1943, the officer representatives began studying the defense of the Central and Voronezh Fronts deployed on the Kursk salient. The group's senior officer Col M.N. Kostin on the Voronezh Front and Col V.T. Fomin under the Central Front forwarded the materials of the inspection along with generalized conclusions and proposals to the General Staff while copies went to the command of the fronts. Before 5 July, the officers informed the General Staff of the improved defenses, the

measures to reinforce them, the indications that the German groupings were preparing for an offensive, its start and the course of the defensive engagement. Subsequently they reported on the preparations of the Soviet troops for a counteroffensive under the Rummyantsev and Kutuzov Plans.

In the Battle of the Dnieper the officer representatives supervised the organization of the crossing, the employment of the crossing facilities, the build-up of forces on the captured bridgeheads and the development of combat to broaden these. The General Staff officer, Lt Col A.A. Pozdnyakov, in being present in the battle formations of the formations of the 3d Tank Army on 15 December, concluded that the employment of tank formations was impossible on the given terrain. On 17 October he sent on to the General Staff a report in which he set out his ideas. Not receiving a reply, A.A. Pozdnyakov on 24 October resent the coded message to the Chief of the General Staff. He felt that it was not advisable to commit the formations of the tank army until the enemy had reached a line of Ulyanki, Medvedevka, Potantsy, Kirillovka.¹³ He was supported by the senior officer of the group, Col M.N. Kostin. The Supreme Command heeded the opinion of the officers. The troops of the front were ordered to regroup their forces from the Bukrin to the Lyutezh bridgehead for launching the main thrust.

In August 1943, in preparing a local offensive operation by the Northwestern Front in the aim of capturing Staraya Russa, a group of General Staff officers was to inspect the equipping of the forming-up place, the procedure for its occupying by the first-echelon units and the accuracy of the start of the infantry assault after artillery fire had been shifted deep into the enemy defenses. However, due to the fact that the front's chief of staff, Lt Gen A.N. Bogolyubov, had concealed from them the day and hour of the assault, a solution to the given questions was beyond control. This was reported to Col Gen S.M. Shtemenko. At that time the front's chief of staff raised the question of removing the senior officer of the group. The General Staff turned down the demand of A.N. Bogolyubov and seriously cautioned him.

In 1943-1944, the troops of the Western Front conducted a series of offensive operations many of which did not achieve the set goals. The representatives of the General Staff, Maj Gen N.F. Garnich, Lt Cols N.V. Reznikov, I.A. Nekrasov and others promptly discovered the reasons for the setbacks. Lt Col N.V. Reznikov detected particularly major errors in the 33d Army (commander, Col Gen V.N. Gordov). In the report of 21 December 1943, he wrote: "Surprise was not achieved. The 30-minute artillery softening up did not neutralize the firing positions of the heavily entrenched enemy defenses. Upon the demand of the commander Gen Gordov, the regimental commanders were in the battle formations of the troops but the divisional commanders were 800-1,000 m away. The offensive was carried out

without considering the demands of the Order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 306 in close groups and the enemy suffered enormous losses.... I feel that there can be no success in poor support for the troops in combat and an operation, from the 'Gordov' methods of leading the operation and from the poor training of the troops."¹⁴

The front's commander, Army Gen V.D. Sokolovskiy, did not heed the warnings of the General Staff officers. The situation on the Western Front alarmed Hq SHC. An authoritative commission was sent out from the GKO. It studied in detail the factors which had led to the failure of the operations and to the heavy losses in personnel and equipment. The commission gave particular attention to studying the reports of the General Staff officers and recognized them to be objective and just. From the results of the work of the commission, serious organizational conclusions were drawn and the good name of the General Staff officers was restored.

During the period of preparing and conducting the Belorussian Strategic Operation, working in the troops of the fronts were: 6 officers headed by Col F.G. Barskiy in the First Baltic Front; 6 headed by Col A.G. Serebryakov and later Lt Col A.S. Orlov on the Third Belorussian; 7 officers headed by Col N.D. Saltykov and after his wounding by Col A.D. Gureyev on the Second Belorussian; 8 officers under the leadership of Col I.V. Solovyev on the First Belorussian. In the course of the operation, they were in the battle formations of the advancing formations and each day reported to the representatives of Hq SHC on troop operations. On 6 July 1944, on the basis of the reports, Hq SHC forwarded to the front commanders and its own representatives a directive concerning shortcomings in troop command, particularly in pursuit, with demands to take decisive measures to eliminate these.¹⁵ During critical moments the officers of the group were where the situation required. Their work was highly regarded by the command. Some 27 men were awarded combat orders.

The corps of General Staff officers which on 1 January 1945 numbered 87 men took an active part in all the concluding operations of the war. The General Staff officers worked in close contact with the operations and intelligence directorates (sections), the political bodies and staffs of the combat arms as well as with the other sections of the field headquarters of the armies and fronts. In a majority of instances they were supported by the commanders, the chiefs of staff and the military council members.

I would like to say a separate word on the contacts of the General Staff officers with MSU G.K. Zhukov. Everywhere where the marshal was a representative of Hq SHC, he met with the General Staff officers, he personally gave them tasks and then listened. When G.K. Zhukov was in the command of the First Belorussian Front, he had direct contact with the senior officer of the group under the front, Col I.V. Solovyev. This bespeaks

the great confidence of the marshal in the General Staff representatives. With good reason in his memoirs Georgiy Konstantinovich [Zhukov] wrote with warmth: "These were fighting officers who knew their job. Many of them gave up their life for the sake of victory. The humble workers of the war, they merited our greatest gratitude and fond memory."¹⁶

From September 1941, in carrying out the assignments of the General Staff Command, many General Staff officers fought their way with the field forces to Berlin itself. Over 30 of them perished in the fighting and engagements or were missing in action, many were wounded but they all did an essential thing for the motherland and the army.

In 1969, the first meeting after the war was held for the former General Staff officers. Army Gen S.M. Shtemenko was invited to it. To the question of whether it could be considered that our organization had proven itself, Sergey Matveyevich [Shtemenko] replied that Hq SHC had always had high praise for the work of the General Staff officers both during the war against Nazi Germany as well as in the campaign in the Far East.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 7-A, inv. 587, file 1, sheet 169.
2. Ibid., folio 48-A, inv. 1121, file 6, sheets 129, 131, 133.
3. Ibid., folio 7-A, inv. 68, file 12, sheet 163.
4. Ibid., folio 19-A, inv. 599, file 5, sheets 92-94.
5. Ibid., folio 48-A, inv. 1121, file 17, sheet 194.
6. Ibid., inv. 1554, file 183, sheets 129-130.
7. Ibid., inv. 1133, file 18, sheet 226.
8. Ibid., inv. 1165, file 7, sheets 138, 139.
9. Ibid., folio 16-A, inv. 2045, file 22, sheets 22-27.
10. Ibid., inv. 1045, file 26, sheets 217-221.
11. Ibid., folio 48-A, inv. 1103, file 5, sheet 467.
12. Ibid., inv. 1165, file 7, sheets 392-394.
13. Ibid., inv. 1147, file 3, sheets 240-245, 246.
14. Ibid., folio 16-A, inv. 948, file 23, sheets 139-143.
15. Ibid., folio 132-A, inv. 2642, file 36, sheets 397-398.

16. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Remembrances and Recollections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 8th Edition, Vol 2, 1988, p 79.

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Reflections on Fate of Military Leader

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[Article, published under the heading "From Unpublished Manuscripts," by Lt Gen (Ret) N.G. Pavlenko, doctor of historical sciences, professor: "Reflections on the Fate of a Military Leader (Notes of a Military Historian)"; conclusion of series; for previous installments see Issues Nos 10 and 11 of this magazine for 1988]

[Text]

4. The Fabricating of Accusations Against the Military Leader and His Disgrace

G.K. Zhukov felt that it was purely fortuitous that he was not among the military leaders who were repressed in the second half of the 1930s. The urgent summons to Moscow and then to Khalkhin-Gol saved him from arrest. But the gathering of compromising facts against him continued when the military leader was at the apex of his power, having become our national hero.

The writer V.V. Karpov and the authors of the "Fragments," referring to the evidence of the former editor-in-chief of KRASNAYA ZVEZDA D.I. Ortenberg, assessed very affirmatively the appearance of Zhukov's photograph in the newspaper. Karpov, for example, termed its publishing a "remarkable fact" which played a definite role in popularizing the military leader. I would like to take this up in greater detail, in dealing with the shadowy aspect of this fact.

After the victory of the Soviet troops at Moscow there was a sharp rise in the authority and popularity of the commander of the Western Front, Army Gen G.K. Zhukov. Obviously, I.V. Stalin did not like this and soon thereafter on the staff of L.P. Beriya they resumed gathering compromising materials about Zhukov. The most remarkable element in these actions was the arrest in the spring of 1942 of the Chief of the Operations Section of the Western Front, Maj Gen V.S. Golushkevich. Beriya and his henchmen were hoping to get at Zhukov with Golushkevich's aid. But their hopes were unjustified. Regardless of all the tricks, the arrested general provided no testimony to damage the military leader.

In following years, particularly in 1943-1944, the popularity of Zhukov grew even higher in the people and this was in no way to Stalin's liking. Initially he tolerated this but in the autumn of 1944 the "great" resolved to get rid

of the military leader. But he wanted to conduct this "operation" more or less decently. It was decided to shift him to the position of front commander. At the same time this decision was accompanied by bitter pills which were made up in the rooms adjacent to the office of N.A. Bulganin who at that time was one of Stalin's confidants.

What were these pills? Stalin did not want to merely shift Zhukov to a different position but also to "ascribe" to him for the first time at least certain errors or oversights which could, when necessary, be inflated to the necessary size. And a group of General Staff officers was involved in searching for these "errors." The object of their "work" was the two artillery manuals approved by Zhukov.

Of course, they did not find any substantial failings. But Zhukov all the same in the order was officially instructed: "...not to be in a hurry in resolving serious questions...."¹

In the autumn of 1944, Stalin began to be more critical of those instructions which the military leader had issued in meetings with the front command. Zhukov at that time did not pay any attention to such minor details. He began to give them some thought only during the period of his first disgrace.

After the end of the Great Patriotic War, Zhukov was put in command of the Group of Soviet Troops in Germany. And even in this short interval of time there was no shortage of information as to his activities. Everything was reported precisely to Stalin: that he had been too generous in decorating the well-known singer L. Ruslanova, that he "boasted" loudly of his victories, that with a group of military men he supposedly was planning a conspiracy against Stalin and so forth. Of all the reports on Georgiy Konstantinovich [Zhukov], I.V. Stalin paid attention only to certain ones, primarily those where it was a question of conspiratorial matters, about "boastful" statements on the victories at the front and the attitudes of followers. For example, Stalin, in Zhukov's words, was extremely embittered when he learned that certain prominent military leaders called themselves "Zhukov boys."²

In the summer of 1945, the fabricating of accusations against Zhukov to a significant degree grew stronger. And all of this started with a seemingly innocent meeting between father and son. During the Potsdam Conference, Stalin had met several times with his son Vasilii who at that time was in the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany. During the first of these, Vasilii complained to his father that our aircraft were supposedly very poor and the American ones were great. This complaint was completely sufficient for Stalin immediately after returning to Moscow to order the arrest of the leaders of the People's Commissariat of the Aviation Industry and the command of the Soviet Army Air Forces. Among those arrested was the People's Commissar of the Aviation

Industry A.I. Shakhurin and Chf Mar Avn A.A. Novikov. Beriya's henchmen did everything possible to gain evidence against Zhukov from Novikov.

As Georgiy Konstantinovich later related, Stalin used the "testimony" by Novikov, as they say, in two different moves. Initially he decided to announce certain information at one of the large meetings held at the end of 1945 in the Kremlin. Zhukov was not there but he learned of this from Flt Adm N.G. Kuznetsov. In his speech, Stalin accused the military leader of having ascribed to himself all the victories and clearly played down the role of Hq SHC [Headquarters Supreme High Command]. Later he went on to say how the operations were conceived and prepared. After this speech, debates commenced. Everyone considered it his duty, Kuznetsov later told Zhukov, to voice his opinion at this unusual meeting by condemning Zhukov. Some spoke sharply and not completely justly but a majority was cautious and certainly not in that spirit. Thus, the ideological preparations had been made to debunk "Zhukov's vanity." After this were to come organizational measures.

Even during Zhukov's stay as the head of the Group of Soviet Troops in Germany, he had to encounter numerous conflict situations. But probably the most risky action was the expulsion of Beriya's deputy Abakumov from Berlin. At the beginning of 1946, Georgiy Konstantinovich had learned that Abakumov, having arrived in Berlin, had begun arresting officers of the Group. Zhukov, of course, could not overlook such misdeeds and summoned Abakumov.

As might be expected, the latter was unable to provide any satisfactory answer as to why he had not paid his respects with the commander-in-chief upon arrival and on what basis he was arresting Zhukov's subordinates. The military leader was forced to propose that Abakumov release all those arrested and immediately go back to where he had come from. Here he added that if Abakumov did not carry out the order, he would be escorted under guard back to Moscow. Zhukov, of course, knew that by so doing he would arouse Stalin's rabid anger. But there was no other solution. He had to protect his troops from arbitrary misrule.

Zhukov did not have long to wait for a response from Moscow. At the end of March, Georgiy Konstantinovich had two talks, rather unpleasant ones, by telephone with Stalin. From these he realized that he was to return as quickly as possible to Moscow and assume command of the Ground Troops.

Georgiy Konstantinovich was in command of the Ground Troops for just 6 weeks. Once in June, the military leader learned that a session had been set for the superior military leadership and he was to attend. He was not informed as to what questions were to be discussed. But late in the evening, when Zhukov had retired to his dacha in Sosnovka, much became clear. He had scarcely undressed and gotten in bed when the

doorbell rang and there was a banging at the door. Then three men came into the room. One of them announced that he had been ordered to conduct a search but was unable to produce a search warrant. It was only under the threat of using arms that Zhukov was able to get them out of the house. After this visit, Georgiy Konstantinovich related, he could not go back to sleep that night. Various thoughts were running through his mind. But the basic one was that the session would obviously be devoted to his person.

In the words of certain marshals (I.S. Konev, K.K. Rokossovskiy and V.D. Sokolovskiy), the aim of this session was to persuade the military leaders of Zhukov's conspiratorial activities.³ For this Beriya's organization had fabricated the "testimony" of more than 70 arrested officers and generals, including the evidence obtained as a result of torturing from Chf Mar Avn A.A. Novikov. From this it followed that Zhukov supposedly was heading a military conspiracy.

Stalin spoke twice at the session as well as Beriya and Kaganovich. Their speeches were of an accusatory nature and basically rested on the testimonies of Novikov and Telegin. But there was a different ring to the speeches of the military leaders who, of course, criticized Zhukov over many questions but decisively rejected any notion of a military conspiracy being prepared. In his own speech Georgiy Konstantinovich said that he was not involved in any conspiracy and asked Stalin to investigate under what circumstances the testimony had been obtained from Telegin and Novikov. "I know these men well," said Zhukov, "I worked with them under the harsh wartime conditions and for this reason am profoundly convinced that someone forced them to write untruth."⁴

It is wise to point out that this "testimony" also contained other accusations against Zhukov. Novikov had pointed out that Zhukov considered Stalin completely incompetent on military affairs and said of him that he had been and remained a "staffer" (a term frequently used in the old Russian Army for staff personnel). The testimony also pointed out that in visiting the troops Zhukov supposedly kept far from the front line and on these grounds a comment had been made about the military leader's cowardice. Golikov spoke rather sharply against Zhukov. He accused him of a lack of restraint and coarseness in dealing with officers and generals, of abusing power and referred to the fact that Zhukov supposedly had unjustifiably released him from the command of the Voronezh Front in 1943. But Stalin on this question made the following rejoinder:

"In the given instance Zhukov did not exceed his authority, he carried out my instructions."

In telling us about this, Georgiy Konstantinovich commented:

"Stalin's reply did not convince Golikov. Even now he considers me the main guilty party for the collapse of his military career."

In Zhukov's words, Rybalko's comments had the greatest impact on Stalin as Rybalko stated directly that the time had long since come to cease believing "testimony extracted by violence in prison." He then went on to give persuasive facts repudiating the slanderous fabrications about Zhukov's "cowardice." Rybalko gave significant attention to Zhukov's arrival in his army when he [Rybalko] had been encircled in the spring of 1944 and the help provided by him.

Of course, Stalin was not satisfied by the comments of the military leaders. He was expecting from them attacks on Zhukov as well as revelations but this did not happen. The "great" had endeavored even to play on the self-esteem of certain military leaders. Thus, during Konev's comments, Stalin commented to him:

"And do you know that Zhukov tried to appropriate your victory at Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy?"

To Konev's honor, it must be said, he replied with dignity:

"I don't know, I have not heard.... What anyone might say on this question, let history figure it out."

After all the comments, Konev recalled, Stalin spoke again, again sharply, but in a somewhat different manner. Obviously, his initial plan was to arrest Zhukov immediately after the session. But having sensed the inner and not only inner resistance of the military leaders and the well-known solidarity of the military with Zhukov, he clearly changed his mind and abandoned his initial intention.

We feel that in his sentiments Konev was right. Stalin actually this time intended to deal with Zhukov, but the solidarity of the military prevented him. Soon thereafter Zhukov left to command the Odessa and then the Urals Military Districts and this is rightly considered his first disgrace which lasted almost 7 years, that is, until Stalin's death in the spring of 1953.

At approximately the same time when the question was being settled of removing Zhukov from the position held, Flt Adm SU N.G. Kuznetsov also fell into disgrace. Following slanderous fabrications he was removed from his position, broken in rank and sent to Vladivostok to command the fleet in the Pacific. Since there are many common factors in the fates of Zhukov and Kuznetsov, it makes sense to take up this question.

At the end of the 1930s, the cavalry leader Zhukov and the naval officer Kuznetsov were already in Stalin's view. Their merits were immediately appreciated and they began to rapidly advance in service. Soon they were already holding high positions: Kuznetsov was

appointed the people's commissar of the Navy while Zhukov became the chief of the General Staff. With the outbreak of the war and over the entire period of it they were members of Headquarters. But soon after the end of the Great Patriotic War, as a consequence of slanderous fabrications, they were removed from their positions and sent to continue service in the hinterlands. But after a certain time, the anger was replaced by clemency. Both military leaders returned to Moscow and were restored to their positions. In the mid-1950s their military activities were again interrupted and they both were in disgrace which lasted almost two decades. In being out of favor, they grew older and died almost simultaneously in 1974.

Zhukov and Kuznetsov were different people. They differed not only in the nature of activity but also by character and views. Because of this friendly relationships did not exist between them. This was also hindered by the difference in views concerning the role of the Navy in the defense of the state.

At the beginning of 1953, Zhukov returned from Sverdlovsk to Moscow and soon thereafter became the deputy minister of defense. In 1955, a decision was taken to appoint him minister of defense. However, the government's leadership learned that this decision had not been approved by certain highly placed military leaders. For example, Mar Sokolovskiy felt that Vasilevskiy would have been better in this position. Because of this Bulganin was instructed to talk with the military leaders and ascertain their viewpoint. During these talks Rokossovskiy said that since the decision to appoint Zhukov had been made, it made no sense to voice an opinion on this question. Kuznetsov was quite hazy in his opinion: if Zhukov would be minister then he would have to be told to change his attitude toward the Navy. This conversation soon became known to Zhukov and this, of course, did not help to improve relations between them.

Having become minister of defense, Zhukov energetically set out to eliminate those shortcomings which, in his opinion, existed in the army. In the Armed Forces they began an intense study of new weapons. Major exercises were conducted with the troops and the manuals were reworked. Zhukov also took measures to deepen the study of the experience of the Great Patriotic War. Upon his direct instructions major military leaders, army commanders, chiefs of staff, the members of the front and army military councils and others were sent on tours of duty to the General Staff. They were all assigned to creative groups to elaborate works on the major operations and most important questions of military art. Measures were also taken to further improve the organization of the Armed Forces, to strengthen discipline and institute order in the troops. However, regardless of the harsh measures, order was not restored in the troops as quickly as the minister would like. It was a disappointment that they were not able to eliminate accidents. These as before occurred in one or another district.

The largest disaster occurred on the Black Sea on 17 October 1956. The Italian battleship named by us "Novorossiysk" which was being delivered to us as a captured vessel struck a mine and then sank. Several hundred sailors lost their lives. An investigation into the circumstances of the loss of the ship showed that in the interests of the question it was necessary to hold responsible not only the superiors who were the direct guilty parties of the accident but also the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet and Commander-in-Chief of the Navy Kuznetsov. The question of the punishment for Kuznetsov was to be settled in the government. Zhukov, as minister of defense, was to submit his own ideas on this question. Here is what Kuznetsov himself related about this most difficult period of his career. Once he was phoned by the Chief of the General Staff Sokolovskiy and told:

"If you can, come to the Kremlin tomorrow. Your question will be discussed." And then he added that virtually everything had been decided before the departure of N.S. Khrushchev to India. But Kuznetsov still went. A.I. Mikoyan who was presiding announced the decision and, without requesting the opinion of the admiral, moved on to the next question.

Sometime later, the 20th Party Congress opened and Kuznetsov, as a member of the CPSU Central Committee, received his admission ticket. "At the end of the first day of the congress' work," he recalled, "my aide was approached in the coatroom by one of Khrushchev's confidants and said loudly so that I would hear: 'What are you doing here?' Knowing that this was said not under his own initiative, I resolved not to attend the session further...."

Sometime later, Kuznetsov learned that he had been removed from his position and broken in rank. No matter how strange it might seem, in the words of Kuznetsov himself, he was already accustomed to such punishment. During his career in the Navy, he had twice been a rear admiral, three times a vice admiral and twice a fleet admiral. The history of no nation's navy knows such shuffling in demotions and promotions to admiral rank. Here not one of the decisions was ever told to him personally. He learned of the party reprimand only 10 years after dismissal.

In 1957, Zhukov also in a rather strange manner was removed from the position of minister of defense. This happened in a period when the marshal was on an overseas visit. Of course, such a form of dismissal for an outstanding military leader and national hero is profoundly insulting. Once he was asked whether he suspected that the storm clouds were gathering around him. The military leader replied: "I am concerned by the fact that the overseas visit coincides with the conducting of troop exercises in the Kiev Military District." On the eve of his departure, Georgiy Konstantinovich related, he

phoned Kiev. To the direct question asked of Khrushchev whether he should go to the exercise, Khrushchev replied: "Carry out your state mission and we here at home will get on with the exercise without you."

As Zhukov later learned, Khrushchev used the presence of many generals at the exercises in his own interests: he asked the opinion of some about the minister of defense while in others he implanted the notion that possibly Zhukov was a person dangerous to the state.

Zhukov did not deny the errors which he had made while holding the post of minister of defense. He was particularly regretful of those which were involved with underestimating the role of the army party organizations and clear problems in disciplinary practices. But the basic factors were different and included slanderous fabrications (he was accused of organizing a special sabotage team); tendentious statements of the marshal's enemies that Zhukov supposedly was not only a power-seeking general but also a "dangerous personality generally"; a biased interpretation of certain erroneous phrases in Zhukov's speeches. Here is one of them. During the fight against the Molotov—Malenkov group, Zhukov in the ardor of polemics made a lamentable slip. In referring to this group he said: "If you are going to continue fighting against the party line, then I will be forced to turn to the army and the people."

Significantly later he learned that this phrase had been interpreted by Khrushchev as a manifestation of "Bonapartism." This label actually covered all the real errors and transgressions of the military leader. With a hint of irony the marshal was also called "Georgiy Pobedonosts [victorious]." And in order that this tag have a more persuasive ring, in certain auditoriums in meetings where he was present they hung up the well-known picture by the artist Yakovlev showing Zhukov on a white horse.

Of course, Zhukov represented no danger for the state but by his popularity with the people he was clearly a hindrance to Khrushchev and certain individuals in his group. For this reason they preferred to keep the marshal out of circulation.

Khrushchev knew that Golikov had a very bad attitude toward Zhukov. It happened that precisely he was appointed the chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy [Glavpur]. He, in Zhukov's words, was assigned to watch over the marshal in disgrace. At the beginning of the 1960s, A.A. Yepishev held this post and he continued to many years to "observe" Zhukov.

With the departure of Khrushchev from the political scene, many decisions carried out during the period of the so-called "great decade" had clearly lost their luster. Since the most serious charges against Zhukov had been unfounded, many expected that the marshal's disgrace would soon be over. But these hopes were not to come true. A serious obstacle on the path to eliminating the

disgrace was the envy of L.I. Brezhnev, M.A. Suslov, A.A. Grechko and others for the enormous popularity of the marshal. Over time the notion of "Bonapartism" had completely faded, no one believed it but it did not disappear and even surfaced from time to time in order to thwart the desire of journalists, historians and others to meet with Zhukov.

Myself, like many other historians, was amazed by this long-playing but still basically worn out record about "Bonapartism." Naturally, the question arose of whether Yepishev himself believed this fable? I obtained a reply from him personally in the summer of 1967. Once I called upon Yepishev with Doctor of Historical Sciences V.M. Kulish. In a talk the question was raised of truth in historical science. And here without any embarrassment, he set out his credo rather clearly: Who needs your truth if it prevents us from living? After this phrase much became clear. It turned out that it was easier for him and his like-thinkers to live in this wide world if false ideas were propagated. Such a view of historical truth, unfortunately, was shared by many other figures but they preferred not to say this so frankly and moreover with witnesses.

At the end of the 1950s and in the first half of the 1960s, work accelerated in investigating the history of the Great Patriotic War. Upon Golikov's initiative and with his direct aid, memoir literature began to be published. The appearance of memoirs on the bookshelves made it possible to eliminate many gaps in military history, particularly in the description of operations. At the same time, there still remained numerous "blank spots" in those scientific works dealing with the superior levels of strategic leadership. This was caused chiefly by the fact that during the war minutes were not kept of the sessions of Hq SHC and there also was an absence of documentary sources on the conversations which Stalin held personally. Zhukov's evidence could have played an enormous role in eliminating these gaps but historians were afraid to approach him as a person in disgrace for almost an entire decade. Of course, things suffered from this flagrant stupidity and primarily historical science. But this was of no concern for those who guarded those in disgrace.

Just how essential was the need for the evidence of the marshal we can try to demonstrate in one example. MSU V.I. Chuykov in his memoirs published in the journal NOVAYA I NOVEYSHAYA ISTORIYA (No. 2, 1965), had made erroneous statements, including: Berlin could have been taken even in February 1945 and this naturally would have brought the end of the war closer. However, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Stalin at that time supposedly ordered the Commander of the First Belorussian Front Zhukov to halt the planning of the offensive against Berlin and take up the elaboration of an operation to defeat the German troops in Pomerania.

Such an assertion not only did not correspond to historical reality but also was used as grounds for accusing the Soviet Command of intentionally drawing out the war and as a result, increasing the number of casualties, as well as the greater destruction of the important political and economic centers in Germany. Thus, the West German magazine DER SPIEGEL (No. 19, 1965), in using Chuykov's article, wrote that the intentional halting of the Russian troops on the Oder led to the senseless loss of hundreds of thousands of German civilians and the destruction of hundreds of cities. If the war had ended in February, the article went on to point out, Dresden would not have been destroyed during the night of 14 February and there would not have been the massed air raids against the Wurtemberg area. Potsdam which had been bombed on the night of 13 April would have been saved.

Also from Chuykov's categorical statement that the taking of Berlin in February would have meant the end of the war stemmed the harsh conclusion for the Soviet people that the sacrifices suffered by us in March-April 1945 were in vain. These erroneous ideas in Chuykov's article not only caused perplexity among specialists but also among many readers who were far removed from history.

In order to help understand the actual facts, the editors of VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL decided to publish a special article on the Berlin Operation. We wanted Zhukov to write it as he was sufficiently completely informed of all the details of the operation. But before offering the article to him, it was decided to consult with certain well-placed individuals. We turned to the CPSU Central Committee and to Glavpur. The deputy of A.A. Yepishev, Col Gen M.Kh. Kalashnik, said that they were already completing the publishing of the six-volume history of the Great Patriotic War and they had gotten by without Zhukov and certainly the journal could get by without him. Then I turned to the Chief of the General Staff, MSU V.M. Zakharov. Here is what he replied to me: "You are the editor-in-chief, you have an editorial board, so you decide whether to offer Zhukov the article or not."

We followed Zakharov's advice. The article soon was delivered to the editors. In it drawing on extensive documentary material, the marshal persuasively showed that in February 1945, the Soviet troops were not in a condition to take Berlin, a pause was required as well as major preparations for the new operation. Zhukov's article was quickly edited and sent to be set up. But with all of our efforts, it made no further progress. Zhukov informed of this said that he would help. And he actually did help. Soon thereafter the article was requested at Central Committee Headquarters and from there came the orders to publish.

The article published by Zhukov was highly regarded among the journal's readers. But among the responses to it was one complaint written by Chuykov. Upon this

complaint, in the autumn of 1965, under the chairmanship of Yepishev at Glavpur a meeting was held with the participation of MSUs I.Kh. Bagramyan, M.V. Zakharov, I.S. Konev, K.S. Moskalenko, K.K. Rokossovskiy, V.D. Sokolovskiy and others. Here Chuykov's views were unanimously rejected.

The external recognition of the end of Zhukov's disgrace was considered to be 8 May 1965, when a large audience at the Kremlin Palace of Congresses greeted the appearance of the marshal with a loud and extended ovation. After this meeting I happened to speak with certain prominent politicians and military leaders. To my amazement, among them were also those who endeavored to explain the ardent response of those present at the meeting by their "immaturity" and by the fact that "they did not understand the heart of the matter." Of course, it was useless to argue with the supporters of such views.

From the summer of 1965, things began reviving at Zhukov's dacha. War comrades began visiting the marshal more frequently, and journalists, historians, writers, cinematographers and other figures turned up at his house. Zhukov began to be invited for speeches to various collectives. For example, he happened to speak in the civilian institutions of higher learning, in the Writers' Union and at the Academy of Social Sciences Under the CPSU Central Committee. But, unfortunately, echoes of his disgrace were still present. For example, the marshal was unable to mingle freely with officers at the clubs of the military units. Those who showed initiative in meeting with the marshal frequently had difficulties in service.

In 1965, cinematographers decided to produce the documentary film "If Your Home is Precious to You" on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet troops at Moscow. They planned to incorporate in the film frames with recollections by Zhukov, Rokossovskiy, Konev and other military leaders. They planned to film Zhukov in Perkhushkov, in that small house which served as his office during the period of the Battle of Moscow. But the Glavpur prohibited this filming. It was recommended to the director V. Ordynskiy that Zhukov not be filmed at all and it was better to utilize old films from the period of the Great Patriotic War. Under the existing conditions it was decided to film the marshal at his dacha in Sosnovka.

In December 1966, Zhukov was 70 years old. A majority of our press organs overlooked this date. As far as I remember, only VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL (No. 11, 1966) published an article entitled "From Soldier to Marshal" and dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the military leader. This article had an involved history. Infinite corrections and the seeking of agreement over numerous weeks beset the editors. Unexpected difficulties also arose over the question of the name of the person who was to sign it.

We have taken up only certain aspects in the life and activities of the military leader. G.K. Zhukov's personality was contradictory and full of contrast, just as his practical activities which were characterized by errors and mistakes during the period he held the post of chief of the General Staff as well as by triumphant victories by those operational-strategic field forces which he commanded during the years of the Great Patriotic War. To the great merit of the military leader, he openly recognized his share of blame in these errors.

The activities of the military leader have been assessed differently. There were years when Zhukov rose to the heights of unprecedented glory and there were periods when he slid into the abyss of disgrace. Being out of favor, he imbibed the full cup of injustice. But we also do not share the efforts of those authors who during the days of the marshals jubilee have endeavored to paint his portrait only in pink tones. A true picture of the great military leader can only be recreated with the entire range of the palette.

Footnotes

1. S.M. Shtemenko, "Generalnyy shtab v gody voyny" [The General Staff in the War Years], Moscow, Voenizdat, Book 2, 1973, p 20.

2. Named among them were the Commander of the 1st Guards Tank Army M.Ye. Katukov, the Commander of the 8th Guards Army V.I. Chuykov and the Artillery Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany V.I. Kazakov.

3. In addition to I.V. Stalin, S.P. Beriia and L.M. Kaganovich, the session was attended by leading figures from the People's Commissariat of Defense: N.A. Bulganin, V.V. Vasilevskiy, F.I. Golikov, G.K. Zhukov, I.S. Konev, V.D. Sokolovskiy, K.K. Rokossovskiy, P.S. Rybalko, S.M. Shtemenko and certain others. The session was chaired by I.V. Stalin. For reading the testimony of A.A. Novikov, the floor was given to S.M. Shtemenko.

4. SOVETSKIY VOIN, No 8, 1988, p 16.

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By Strong-Willed Decisions...

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ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 88 (signed to press
23 Nov 88) pp 38-50

[Interview, published under the heading "Our Interviews," with Lt Gen (Ret) Ivan Vladimirovich Kovalev by Col N.Ye. Medvedev, science editor for problems of rear services economics: "By Strong-Willed Decisions..."]

[Text] During the difficult July days of 1941, Mil Engr 1st Rank I.V. Kovalev assumed the position of chief of the Soviet Army Military Railroads Directorate. Ivan

Vladimirovich [Kovalev] worked 3 ½ years with the military railroads, taking a direct part in the preparations and execution of the most important operations of the Great Patriotic War. From February 1942, he was a member of the Transport Committee Under the State Defense Committee. In December 1944, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet appointed I.V. Kovalev the people's commissar of railroads.

The editors of the journal asked Doctor of Military Sciences, Professor, Lt Gen (Ret) I.V. Kovalev to share his recollections on certain events in the Great Patriotic War as well as describe the particular features of the military service of the railroad troops and the military railroads bodies during the war years.

[Medvedev] Ivan Vladimirovich, in what situation did you assume the post of chief of the Soviet Army Military Railroads Directorate? What episodes from the initial period of the Great Patriotic War have remained in your memory?

[Kovalev] The Red Army Military Railroads Directorate (UPVOSO), as is known, on the eve of the war was part of the General Staff. Under the chief of the UPVOSO were the military railroads bodies as well as the railroad units of the People's Commissariat of Defense and these were being kept at reduced peacetime establishments.

As a result of the treacherous attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, rail transport in the Western Theater of Operations was in a difficult situation. The mobilizing of the border railroads and the deploying of VOSO [Military Railroads] bodies on them was seriously disrupted and in places broken. Many railroad units and formations had to change the mobilization points and areas. Because of this they, as a rule, were unable to promptly deploy. The work of the VOSO bodies was greatly complicated by the frequent unplanned redirecting of the operational trains from one sector to another. The commenced mass evacuation moves caused an unprecedented load on the railroads. In such a complicated situation with few personnel the VOSO bodies were unable to keep track of the entire mass of troop trains and transports and supervise their movement and unloading. Because of this command and control of the movements were often disrupted. The General Staff busy with the resolving of a multiplicity of immediate operational questions on the fronts where heavy defensive battles were underway was unable to always provide substantial help to the VOSO bodies.

Headquarters High Command hurriedly was shifting the units and formations of the 16th Army to the Western Front. I, at that time the USSR deputy people's commissar of state control, was given the task of finding and immediately delivering the troop trains with the units of this army to the Western Front. In carrying out the assignment of Headquarters, I visited Smolensk, Orsha, Mogilev, Borisov and Bryansk and had become familiar with the transport situation in rather great detail.

The results of personal observations as well as information from the railroaders and troop unit personnel showed that the German aviation had made raids against Smolensk, Orsha, Borisov and Minsk daily at the same time, from 2100 hours to 0600 hours in the morning. Here the aircraft bombed, as a rule, only the major junctions where a large number of trains had been concentrated by evening and did not bother with attacking the intermediate stations and trains en route.

The reason for the accumulating of the trains at the junctions was caused by the years of the habit developing in the railroad workers of delivering the largest number of cars by the end of the report days which on the railroads occurred at 1800 hours and also by the hope that the railroad junctions had at least some cover against enemy aviation. The leadership of the NKPS [People's Commissariat of Railroads] turned to the General Staff and UPVOSO with a request to provide air defense weapons for the junctions and major stations or at least for the railheads. But the General Staff was unable to do this, as there were not enough air defense weapons for covering the most important facilities.

On 3 July, at the Bryansk Rail Junction, I met the first trains with units of the 16th Army. I was helped to figure out the rather difficult transport situation by the experience I had gained as the chief of the Western Railroad. First of all, I recommended that the stationmasters not concentrate the trains at the railroad junctions for the night and I also acquainted the army command with the Nazi air tactics in attacking the railroads. I arrived with the first army train in Smolensk and immediately headed off to see the Commander of the Western Front, MSU S.K. Timoshenko. At the front's staff the information on the arrival of the 16th Army was greeted with a great sense of relief. The front commander immediately reported this to Headquarters. I received an order to report immediately to Moscow.

I made a brief report on the work done and my proposals to improve railroad capacity in the presence of certain GKO [State Defense Committee] and Headquarters members. The essence of the proposals came down to the following. In order to eliminate the "blockages" at the rail junctions, it was essential to prohibit the concentrating of the trains during the night at the rail junctions. The systematic raids against them by the enemy aviation not only caused destruction to the tracks (these were easily rebuilt) but also blocked the stations with destroyed boxcars and flat cars, burning tank cars or cars with exploding shells. The trains at night should be removed to the intermediate stations or at least sent out on the sections and then the destruction of the junctions would be minimized. After the air raids the reconstruction units would not be distributed over all the facilities but rather employed on a centralized basis. It would be best to rebuild first one or two tracks for the passage of the trains and then rebuild the other facilities.

At this time, Headquarters High Command was also concerned with the delayed delivery of ammunition and weapons to the fronts. Frequently the cars dispatched to the troops carrying weapons did not arrive at the proper time in the formations. Complaints had come from the front commanders to Headquarters over this issue and this caused strong irritation with the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. I.V. Stalin ordered the member of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee Politburo, A.A. Andreyev, and myself to visit the NKPS and VOSO and establish why the military freight did not arrive on time and prepare a draft decision of the GKO addressed to the NKPS and UPVOSO for organizing normal railroad operations.

The Chief of the UPVOSO, Lt Gen N.I. Trubetskoy, had created all conditions for making a careful and thorough analysis of UPVOSO as well as NKPS operations. As the inspection showed, the maximum calculated capacity of the railroads as planned by the troop schedule could not be fully used with the start of the mass troop movements by rail. The existing railheads were unable to handle the scheduled flow of trains due to the significant damage to transport facilities by enemy aviation, because of the oversaturating of many sections with the car fleet and the forming of "blockages" at the rail junctions.

As it turned out, trains carrying weapons and ammunition were dispatched in small sizes (three-five cars each). At the insistence of the People's Commissar of Railroads L.M. Kaganovich and with the approval of the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, MSU G.I. Kulik, the UPVOSO ceased assigning numbers to such troop transports. To Kulik who was uninformed on transport questions it seemed that the UPVOSO was a superfluous intermediate level and, if it could be bypassed, movements would be made faster. As a result of this, trains carrying acutely scarce freight (submachine guns, anti-tank and antiaircraft cannons, ammunition and shells) were outside the reporting and supervision by the VOSO bodies and the NKPS and often were lost among the consists with secondary freight. The stationmasters usually sent unsupervised freight to dead ends where they stood idle for a long time.

The delayed delivery of cargo to the freights as well as interruptions in troop movements which occurred during the first weeks of the war showed oversights and mistakes in the operations of the NKPS and the VOSO bodies as well as the freight dispatchers. To the recommendations set out above to eliminate the "blockages" at the rail junctions we recommended that the railroads conduct a nation-wide census of cars, choose among these the cars to carry weapons and ammunition, assign them numbers of troop transports and under the supervision of the VOSO bodies dispatch them to their destination. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief approved our proposals. His response to the results of the inspection followed, as we were soon to find out, immediately.

During those years, the years of the cult of Stalin, it was generally accepted that someone had to bear personal responsibility for any hitches. It was essential to find the "guilty party" without fail. In the given instance the blame for the interruptions in rail transport operations and the problems in handling the troop movements was placed on the VOSO chief, Lt Gen N.I. Trubetskoy. During our work at the UPVOSO he suddenly, and unnoticed by anyone, disappeared and no one at the directorate could say where he had gone. After a certain time, A.A. Andreyev was phoned by L.P. Beriia and cautioned for us to continue work and further instructions would be received by courier. Soon thereafter a courier handed me a package. In it was an excerpt from the order of the people's commissar of defense of 8 July 1941. By this order Gen N.I. Trubetskoy had been relieved and I was appointed the chief of the UPVOSO. In this difficult situation and as a complete surprise there began my service in the VOSO bodies.

As later became known, Gen N.I. Trubetskoy had been arrested and repressed. In 1956, he was completely rehabilitated. There had been no element of a crime in his actions. Nikolay Iustinovich [Trubetskoy] was also restored to the party.

[Medvedev] By the order of the people's commissar of defense of 1 August 1941, the UPVOSO was removed from the General Staff and put under the just-created Soviet Army Main Directorate of Rear Services. What had caused this? Did this reassigning tell on the directorate assigned to you?

[Kovalev] A small historical digression. Since their founding, the VOSO bodies had been an important service of the general staffs. Precisely they were responsible for working out the wartime requirements on the development of the railroads and supervising their implementation, participation in the elaboration of mobilization plans and the plans for the strategic concentration and deployment of the armed forces, the operational plans for the offensive and defensive operations of the fronts and groups of fronts as well as planning all types of troop movements and supervising their prompt execution. The main function of the VOSO bodies was the organizing of the theaters of operations with lines of communications [railroads] which could ensure the mobility and maneuverability of mass armies.

If one looks closely at the tasks which confronted the VOSO bodies then it can be noticed that they were all carried out with the closest cooperation of the UPVOSO with the General Staff. For this reason, I personally felt that it was correct to place the UPVOSO under the chief of the General Staff. As for the summer of 1941, here one must consider the particular features which existed during the period of the reassigning of the VOSO bodies. First of all, at this time the rear bodies of the Center and in the field were being organized for the first time in the Soviet Army. It was essential to define the composition of the rear services. Upon instructions of the Supreme

Commander-in-Chief, the VOSO bodies at that time were considered as among the rear services. The Chief of the General Staff, Army Gen G.K. Zhukov and his deputy, Lt Gen N.F. Vatutin argued against this. By the strong-willed decision of I.V. Stalin, the UPVOSO was included in the Rear Services General Directorate. Characteristically, no one spoke with me, as the VOSO chief, on the question of the reassigning of the military railroads. Possibly this question was approved with the chief of the rear services, Gen A.V. Khrulev, but he did not inform me of this.

I will not take it upon myself to answer the question of whether the reassigning told on the operations of the VOSO bodies at the Center and in the field. At that time, I did not even think about this as there was no point to it. I had worked in the new position for a little time, less than a month. The UPVOSO personnel were unstintingly engaged in organizing troop movements and the directorate was being formed according to new TOE.

On 16 July 1941, the TOE of the UPVOSO were significantly broadened. Instead of the 9 sections there were now 12. The movements of all types of freight were now under the control of not one but rather three sections: movements of ammunition, fuels, lubricants and military supplies; shipments of quartermaster services; manning and evacuation moves. A new section was established for the rebuilding and guarding of the railroads. Added to the two deputy chiefs of the UPVOSO who were in charge of troop movements and the railroad troops was a third who was responsible for military supply movements. In August and September, the TOE of the directorate was increased twice. The planning of fuel and lubricant shipments became an independent sector while new sectors were established such as the supply of troops with rail equipment, medical evacuation, a personnel section and other subunits.

After the significant reorganization of the Directorate's structure, the work of the VOSO bodies improved noticeably. Contact of the UPVOSO with the central supply directorates was simplified and the process of planning troop movements was accelerated. Each section began independently to plan the movements and it could more easily and quickly incorporate essential changes in the movement plans.

As paradoxical as it may seem, at the outset of the war there was no regulation which would define the rights and duties of the field VOSO bodies and this put them under indefinite conditions in relation to the administration of the railroads and waterways. Simply no one at that time was seriously concerned with this question. By the order of the people's commissar of defense of 22 October 1941, there finally was announced a regulation governing the VOSO chiefs of the fronts and armies in wartime and they were to become fully-empowered

representatives of the command of the front (army) on the railroads and waterways. This greatly facilitated the tasks of the VOSO bodies in organizing troop movements.

All the measures carried out in July-September 1941 to strengthen and reinforce the VOSO bodies were brought about by the needs of the war and by combat reality. Is it scarcely right to link all of this with the question of their reassignment to a new command. Honestly speaking, there were no particular changes felt in the work of the UPVOSO because of the incorporation of the UPVOSO in the Soviet Army Rear Services Directorate.

[Medvedev] The Transport Committee was set up under the GKO for coordinating the work of all types of transport and for more clearly controlling troop and national economic movements. You were a member of it. Please tell us, Ivan Vladimirovich, about your work on this committee.

[Kovalev] In line with the loss of a significant (up to 40 percent) most developed and built-up portion of the nation's railroad network, great difficulties arose in the operation of rail transport. In reporting in January 1942 to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the results of the movement of troops and military equipment to the Northwestern Front, I pointed out that the management of the USSR transport system was primitive. For improving it it would be advisable to set up a transport committee the decisions of which would be obligatory for all types of transport and for those using them. Several days later I handed him a brief report of 1½ pages which set out the proposed changes.

On 14 February, an enlarged session of the GKO and VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo was held with the participation of certain top leaders of the People's Commissariat of Defense, the NKPS, the People's Commissariat of the River Fleet and the UPVOSO chief. In opening the session, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief pointed out that transport was operating unsatisfactorily. The NKPS had not been able to convert completely to a wartime footing. Instead of adopting specific effective decisions in the commissariat and on the railroads, they made it a practice of holding frequent meetings which diverted the workers from leadership over the movements. In order to improve transport operations, he continued, a proposal had come in to establish a transport committee. This question was to be resolved democratically (prior to this he himself had personally taken a decision on all the reviewed questions!). Those who favor the establishing of the transport committee would please raise their hands.

Of all those present, I was the only one to vote for the given proposal. Not expecting such an outcome, obviously, Stalin glanced slowly at everyone and said approximately thus:

"You are not quite correct in understanding the essence of the proposal. It is a question primarily of the fate of the nation. Transport plays an important role in the life of the nation. If we do not strengthen it we will not achieve a fundamental change and we will lose everything. The motion has been made to vote again.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

After a slight pause, Stalin continued:

"There is also a proposal to elect Comrade Stalin as the chairman of the Transport Committee."

The decision was adopted unanimously.

Upon Stalin's proposal, the immediate elaboration of all the plans for troop, evacuation and defense shipments was to be entrusted to a group of three consisting of A.A. Andreyev, A.I. Mikoyan and I.V. Kovalev. When necessary the three should meet, emphasized the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, at any time of the day.

The Transport Committee Under the GKO was set up with the following membership: I.V. Stalin (chairman), A.A. Andreyev (deputy chairman), A.I. Mikoyan (SNK [Council of People's Commissars]), L.M. Kaganovich (NKPS), A.V. Khrulev (chief of rear services), I.V. Kovalev (UPVOSO), G.V. Kovalev (NKPS), V.A. Shashkov (People's Commissar of the River Fleet), P.P. Shirshov (Glavsevmorput [Main Administration of the Northern Seaway] and A.G. Karponosov (General Staff).

With the forming of the Transport Committee which assumed control over the management of transport on a nation-wide scale, the functions of the UPVOSO were fundamentally altered. It became not only a body for planning and supervising the troop movements but also the operational staff of the Transport Committee. The chief of the UPVOSO frequently had to travel in the field not only for accelerating the shipments but also as a representative of the GKO for accelerating the constituting and dispatch to the front of new formations and field forces. The UPVOSO had to be concerned not only with military but also national economic shipments. And this task with each passing day became more and more complicated.

[Medvedev] By the GKO decree of 25 March 1942, the deputy people's commissar of defense and chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services, Gen A.V. Khrulev, was also appointed people's commissar of railroads. For more than a year (until May 1943) he combined these two responsible posts. What can explain such a decision? Did this tell on the activities of the VOSO bodies?

[Kovalev] The situation on the railroads in February-March 1942 as before remained tense. This question was reviewed several times at sessions of the Transport Committee. L.M. Kaganovich recognized the seriousness of the situation, assuring us that the necessary

measures would be taken, however he returned to his favorite method of "mobilizing the masses," that is, by frequent and lengthy "pep-talk" meetings and the UPVOSO was forced to send a note to the GKO entitled "On the Difficult Situation in Rail Transport Threatening to Halt All Traffic." This set out the measures which had to be taken in order to improve the situation.

The GKO decided to release L.M. Kaganovich from the duties of people's commissar of railroads. The question arose of appointing a successor. As I came to learn, events developed in the following manner. I.V. Stalin proposed L.I. Beriya as a candidate, reinforcing his view by the fact that in the history of our state there already was an instance when this position was successfully filled by the representative of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, F.E. Dzherzhinskiy. Beriya tried in every possible manner to refuse and as a counterweight proposed Gen A.V. Khrulev as a candidate. They ultimately decided on this candidate. In justifying the given decision, as A.V. Khrulev recalled later on, Stalin said: "...The combining in one person of two positions—the people's commissar of railroads and the chief of rear services—will make it possible in a more dependable manner to settle the question of the delivery to the field forces of all that is required to defeat the enemy." On 25 March, the GKO decree was signed appointing the deputy people's commissar of defense and chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services A.V. Khrulev as people's commissar of railroads as a second position.

Of course, this was not the best way out of the situation. In being responsible for the operation of the Soviet Army Rear Services, Andrey Vasilyevich [Khrulev] could not, of course, devote himself fully to transport operations. Moreover, he did not have an engineer education. In practical terms he had to master from scratch the difficult wisdom of the transport service. He assigned a great deal to his deputies and at times this led to erroneous decisions. It must not be forgotten that Beriya under the pretext of supervising the transport services, had extensively placed his own representatives widely in them and under the conditions of the mass repressions this caused great anxiety in the work. The appointing of A.V. Khrulev as people's commissar of railroads as a second post, in my view, told negatively on the operations of both transport and the rear services. This was persuasively shown by the very fact of the dismissal of A.V. Khrulev from the duties of people's commissar of railroads when due to the fault of the NKPS in the spring of 1943 the shifting of the troops of the Don Front from around Stalingrad to the Kursk Salient was unsuccessful. At that time, the NKPS did not deliver empty rolling stock for the loading area on time.

When Stalin learned of the failure to move the troops, he called in Gen Khrulev. He endeavored to put the blame on the TsUPVOSO [Central Military Railroads Directorate]. I was immediately summoned to the Kremlin. I reported that the requests for the empty rolling stock had been submitted by the TsUPVOSO to the NKPS ahead

of time and referred to the corresponding documents. Who was right and who was to blame the Supreme Commander-in-Chief did not try to figure out but rather ordered a trip to Lubyanka to see Beriya and there straighten out relations. I, of course, do not know what he said to Beriya. Having heard us out, the latter immediately telephoned the front's commander, Gen K.K. Rokossovskiy, and the Chief of the Military Railroads Directorate of the Front, Gen V.I. Dmitriyev. Both generals reported that there were no empty cars and what was available was only a small number of damaged cars in which it was impossible to transport troops and equipment.

Khrulev emerged from Beriya's office pale and very excited. Soon thereafter he was dismissed from the duties of people's commissar of railroads. Kaganovich again took over the people's commissariat.

[Medvedev] The defeat of the Nazi troops at Moscow was an outstanding event not only of the Great Patriotic War but also World War II. Here, at Moscow, the Wehrmacht suffered its first major defeat in the course of World War II. At Moscow the Soviet Army shattered the myth of the invincibility of the Nazi troops. What events from this period left with you, Ivan Vladimirovich, the most vivid impressions?

[Kovalev] During the difficult days of the defense of Moscow, when the front was in acute need of reinforcements, there were chiefs who proposed eliminating the railroad troops, employing their personnel as rifle units, while the equipment would be turned over to special NKPS formations, making this people's commissariat responsible for rebuilding the front railroads. In November, a commission was established headed by the chief of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Main Political Directorate [Glavpur], L.Z. Mekhlis, with the task of preparing a draft GKO decision on the given question. The commission included the chiefs of the Central Directorates of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff, the Deputy People's Commissar of Railroads I.D. Gotsiridze, the Chief of the UPVOSO and certain others.

At a regular session of the commission held sometime at the end of December 1941 the question was discussed of manning a shock army which was being organized upon Stalin's proposal at this time around Moscow. When I entered the office (for some reason I arrived late to the meeting), the comments had already been completed and Mekhlis was summing up. They were voting on the proposal to break up the rail troops and turn the personnel of their units over to manning the combined units of the shock army. All the commission members were in favor of eliminating the railroad troops.

"The decision has been adopted unanimously," stated Mekhlis. But, having noticed me entering the room, added: "I am sure that Comrade Kovalev would also agree."

Prior to the war I had been a subordinate of L.G. Mekhlis who then headed the USSR People's Commissariat of State Control and clearly, for this reason, he had counted so confidently that there would be no arguments from me. However, I stated my views sharply against such a decision, saying that this reflected defeatist attitudes. Mekhlis immediately telephoned the commission's decision to Stalin, having emphasized that everyone (he mentioned those present by name), were in favor of eliminating the railroad troops, with the exception of one. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief requested to speak with the person who dissented. I.V. Stalin agreed with my arguments that in the forthcoming offensive operations it would be necessary to have the mass rebuilding of the enemy-destroyed railroads and bridges and for this specially trained railroad troops would be essential, and asked to speak to Mekhlis again. I was standing nearby and heard clearly as Stalin said sharply:

"You are a defeatist. Disband the commission."

Mekhlis immediately handed the receiver back to me.

"Comrade Kovalev, we will keep the railroad troops," said Stalin continuing the conversation with me. "But let us give some thought under whom they should be put so that the commanders of the front do not 'execute' them."

By the word "execute" Stalin had in mind the attempts by certain commanders to plug the holes formed in the defenses using units of special troops, including the railroad troops.

On 3 January 1942, the GKO adopted a decree on maintaining the railroad units and combined formations of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense] but transferred them to operational subordination of the NKPS and which was responsible for the rebuilding and operation of the front railroads. The UPVOSO was left with the functions of inspecting the railroad troops and supervising the course of the planned reconstruction and security work.

During the Battle of Moscow, the railroad, motor transport units and combined units as well as the VOSO bodies under unbelievably difficult conditions showed tenacity, self-sacrifice and mass heroism and they carried out the tasks set for them. But it must be said directly that transport could have done more. Shortcomings in the organization of its operations, I am profoundly convinced, to a certain degree also told on the development of the Soviet troop counteroffensive at Moscow. The fronts had to break off the offensive prematurely also due to factors depending upon transport. Transport was unable to promptly provide the major rail and motor troop movements under the conditions of the deep snow cover. As the offensive developed, the front railroads were extremely overloaded. In February 1942, they began literally to "be sewn up." The rate of rebuilding them on enemy-liberated territory was 2- or 3-fold less than the rate of troop advance. The lack of a sufficient

amount of motor transport for the fronts prevented the prompt delivery to the troops of ammunition, fuel, combat equipment and supply cargo. Certainly this could have been planned ahead of time. All the more as the UPVOSO had reported ahead of time to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and to the people's commissar of railroads on the probable occurrence of such a situation. Measures were taken but, unfortunately, these were very late.

[Medvedev] In the course of the defensive engagement in preparing the Soviet troops for the Stalingrad counteroffensive, the rail troops and VOSO bodies had to operate in a very difficult situation. Please tell us, Ivan Vladimirovich, about certain episodes from the operation of the UPVOSO.

[Kovalev] A tense situation arose in mid-July 1942 on the Southeastern Railroad. There was a threat of the breakdown of troop movements to the Stalingrad area. At the end of July 1942, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief summoned me to the Kremlin, he filled me in on the difficult transport situation around Stalingrad and ordered me to immediately leave for the field and eliminate the blockages in train traffic. Blockages had arisen on the sector of the junction of Povorino which operated to four sectors: Stalingrad, Balashov, Liski, Lipetsk. The Nazis bombed the station every night. Because of this the railroad leadership had shifted the fueling and watering of steam engines from Povorino to Zherdevka where at a small coal dump they hurriedly built a primitive equipping facility. While coal was being delivered in a small crane to the tender of one steam locomotive with the aid of a small-capacity trough, the others stood idle waiting their turn. Blockages formed constantly in the Zherdevka area.

Having become acquainted in detail with the situation, I resolved to use both stations for fueling and watering the steam locomotives. During the day, when the enemy aviation was not particularly active, the fueling of the steam locomotives was carried out at Povorino and at night in Zherdevka. For increasing the capacity of the lines, we organized one-way train traffic to Stalingrad, holding up the empty rolling stock at the stations of the Stalingrad junction. As a result, the blockages were eliminated in the Zherdevka area.

During the Stalingrad Operation, I happened to visit the front several times upon assignment of Hq SHC. When the concentrating of reserves had started for conducting the counteroffensive, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief at one of the meetings again cautioned me that the UPVOSO was to carry out all troop movements in observing particular security measures, as the troops were being moved to Stalingrad not only from the nation's rear but also from other sectors of the front. For example, they planned to deliver 115 battalions of rocket artillery alone. Headquarters categorically prohibited anyone from talking over the telephone on the preparations for the offensive. The chief of the UPVOSO was

permitted to inform the Headquarters representatives and the commanders of the front concerning the course of the movements only in personal conversation. I assumed special supervision over the operation of the VOSO bodies in the field.

The operations groups of co-workers from the UPVOSO and the Troop Movement Directorate of the NKPS, in organizing and supervising the loading, transporting and unloading of troops and supplies on the railroads and in the engine yards, were acquainted only with their work area. Neither the commanders of the units and combined units being moved, the transport workers nor the local VOSO bodies knew the final destinations. The front commanders were given data only on the movements of troops and equipment in their zones. Information on the movement of the RVGK [Reserve Supreme High Command] units and combined units was provided only to the members of Hq SHC, their representatives on the fronts and the chief of the UPVOSO.

For direct leadership over the planning of the movements on the front rail sections as well as the work of the railheads and major rail junctions, the UPVOSO sent special operations groups into the field. Strict supervision by the Center helped to accelerate the movements and the faster execution of unloading work. The VOSO bodies succeeded in carrying out a large number of troop movements in a comparatively short period of time and without the enemy learning of this. Nazi intelligence did not discover the Soviet Command's concentration of large reserves at Stalingrad. And this was one of the reasons for the successful counteroffensive.

[Medvedev] By a decision of Hq SHC, the VOSO bodies in January 1943 were placed under the combined-arms staffs but soon thereafter, in March of the same year, the given decision was repealed. The military railroads in organizational terms were again part of the Soviet Army Rear Services. How can such organizational measures be viewed? Incidentally, in January 1943, the UPVOSO was changed into the Central Directorate [TsUPVOSO]. Was there a logical link between these events?

[Kovalev] In the course of the offensive in the winter of 1942-1943, our troops liberated a significant portion of the occupied territory. In many areas the enemy had destroyed the railroads. The VKP(b) Central Committee and the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] demanded that all of the party and soviet bodies provide the greatest possible aid to rail transport. The struggle to improve railroad operations was declared to be a general-party task of state importance. The search was continued for a new structure to manage transport. In particular, talks resumed about the military railroads service.

On 31 January 1943, Hq SHC adopted a decision on converting the UPVOSO into the Central Military Railroads Directorate (TsUPVOSO) and placed it under the chief of the General Staff while the local VOSO bodies

were put under the combined-arms staffs. The VOSO bodies were made responsible for leadership and supervision over the preparation, organization and execution of all types of troop movements as well as the elaboration and submission to the transport people's commissariats of the NKO demands for the reconstruction, construction and security of the railroads and water communications. Simultaneously with the establishing of the TsUPVOSO, the organization of the VOSO bodies in the fronts was revised. The sections were reorganized as VOSO directorates. According to the new TOE, they began to consist of railroad and technical sections, line and financial departments while on certain fronts there were also water shipments departments.

Experience showed that the organizing of supply shipments required the joint efforts of many services under the leadership of the rear services chiefs. In line with this, come 36 days later, on 7 March 1943, the VOSO bodies by an order of the people's commissar of defense were taken away from the General Staff and the front and army staffs and reassigned to the chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services and the rear services chiefs of the fronts, districts and armies. The General Staff was in charge of planning and setting the train standards for all types of troop movements and supervision over their execution. The chief of the Rear Services was also made responsible through the TsUPVOSO for working out the requests for all types of troop movements in accord with the plans of the General Staff and issuing these to the NKPS bodies and organizing their prompt execution.

Such hasty decisions on the reassigning of the VOSO bodies were taken by arbitrary decision, upon the personal initiative of Stalin. In truth, he signed the first of these documents as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and the second which canceled the contents of the first, as the people's commissar of defense. The immediate grounds for this were, in my view, the poor organization of troop movements from the Don Front near Stalingrad to the Kursk Salient.

From the experience of the last war, I can state with firm conviction that the TsUPVOSO would have best been within the system of the General Staff, as virtually all the questions concerning operational movements and supply shipments both in the preparation and in the course of an operation had to be settled by the VOSO chief in a very narrow circle and chiefly with the chief of the General Staff and his deputies, and not with the chief of the rear services. We coordinated with them only the questions concerning the shipment of ordinary supply freight. With the subordination of the VOSO bodies to the General Staff within the TsUPVOSO, it was advisable to have a Supply Shipment Directorate and this would have dual subordination to the chief of the TsUPVOSO and to the chief of the Rear Services.

[Medvedev] In the concluding stage of the Great Patriotic War, you, Ivan Vladimirovich, were appointed people's commissar of railroads. Please tell us briefly about this responsible post.

[Kovalev] At the end of 1944, problems again arose in transport operations. It was essential to take emergency measures so that the rail transport did not collapse. In December 1944, L.M. Kaganovich was again relieved of the duties of people's commissar of railroads. And again he had not drawn proper conclusions from the harsh lessons of the war. The NKPS as before was intolerably slow in responding to the frequent changes in the transport situation and the suddenly arising needs of the army. On 20 December 1944, by an Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, I was appointed to this post. Thus ended my service in the VOSO bodies. Maj Gen Tech Trps V.I. Dmitriyev assumed the post of chief of the TsUPVOSO.

The new leadership of the NKPS was confronted with great work in order to rectify the state of affairs in rail transport. At that time the NKPS was being provided with daily help from the VKP(b) Central Committee, the GKO and the USSR SNK. Due to the adopted measures during the difficult winter months of 1945, there was a marked increase in the volume of rail shipments and from the spring all the main operating indicators of the railroads improved. During the final operations of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet railroaders successfully handled the task of supporting the strategic regroupings of the fronts as well as supplying them with everything essential for the defeat of Nazi Germany. As the people's commissar of railroads I later was to participate in the work of the historic Potsdam Conference.

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What Actually Happened?

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[Article, published under the heading "They Write to Us," by V.M. Galayko: "What Actually Happened?"]

[Text] Probably in our nation at present there is not a single publication which has not dealt with history and has not published essays, articles and dialogues devoted to various problems of the past. Not only the historical, sociopolitical and literary but also many special publications such as technical, scientific and sectorial find room to welcome on their pages Clio, the Muse and Patroness of History.

The range of authors writing on historical subjects has also broadened sharply. Everyone is writing including economists having put off production affairs, poets, interrupting the search for rhyme and critics, forgetting the problems of modern literary life. The impression is created that the eliminating of the "blank spots" of history for certain people has become a new, fashionable undertaking which makes it possible to quickly find oneself in the center of public attention.

Yes, the interest in history is great. But let us not be in a hurry to rejoice over this. Acquaintance with certain publications shows that their authors have disregarded the rule which proclaims: "History is a precise science, a science of facts." Without bothering themselves with checking, in intentionally or unintentionally mixing the truth with untruth, they not only confuse the readers but also throw a shadow of mistrust on our heroes. Military history is particularly vulnerable on this level.

But let us turn to the publications. The journal OGONEK, No. 18 for 1988, contained an essay on the meetings of the editor of the book "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Recollections and Reflections], A. Mirkina with MSU G.K. Zhukov. In it there are lines which the marshal described the capturing of the traitor Gen Vlasov: "On the Potsdam sector his aide rushed up to us. He informed us where Vlasov was. A unit was sent off. They caught up and encircled him.

"'There,' shouted the aide, 'is his motor vehicle!'

"They halted it. There was a driver, someone else and some packages with articles. But no Vlasov.

"'Search for him, he is here under the stuff!' shouted the aide.

"They pulled away the things. Out jumped Vlasov and ran down the boundary. His aide caught up with him and hit him with a revolver in the back of the head. He fell. He had been captured."

This is how the event is described in OGONEK. But how did it occur in reality? Here, excusing myself for the long quote, I would like to give a fragment from the memoirs of Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen Ye. Fominykh, who during the war years was in command of the XXV Tank Corps the soldiers of which were the ones who captured the traitor general. "After our intelligence had detected the location of Vlasov's staff and his troops," wrote Ye. Fominykh, "careful observation was set

up over them and the roads to the west were blocked. Vlasov knew that the Soviet troops were near and from someone's recommendation had decided to immediately retreat deep into the American troop positions.

"However, his units were spread out and many Vlasov officers were seeking to meet with the Soviet soldiers in order to go over to them. Our battalion commander, Capt Yakushev, in this manner met one officer from the Vlasov troops who in the past was also a captain and also a battalion commander.

"Having learned of Vlasov's departure, this captain approached Yakushev. Reflecting a moment, Yakushev jumped in the vehicle of Capt Kuchinskiy (Kuchinskiy was an officer of the Vlasov staff.—Author) and rushed

to intercept Vlasov's column, having hurriedly warned his chief of staff about this. Having passed the column of cars and special vehicles, Yakushev placed his vehicle across the road.

"The column halted.... At this time, Capt Kuchinskiy informed Yakushev that Vlasov was also in the column. Having run past all the vehicles and having inspected them hurriedly, they did not discover Vlasov....

"All of a sudden the driver of the fourth vehicle by a nod indicated to Yakushev that Vlasov was there.

"...Yakushev pulled open the vehicle's door and saw a folded-up carpet. He pulled out the carpet and Vlasov slid out from it. After a moment, in front of everyone Yakushev pushed Vlasov up against his vehicle. By this time, long lines of submachine gunners from the motorized rifle battalion of the brigade of Col Mishchenko began appearing out of the forest.

"Hurry to the staff!" Yakushev ordered the driver and he started off with a jerk.

"The driver lost his way and they began wandering through the forest full of Vlasov troops. Vlasov was watching and, having chosen the proper moment, jumped out of the vehicle and fled....

"Yakushev...rushed after him, pulling his pistol from the holster. But seeing that this race was beyond the power of the quickly tiring general did not shoot....

"Vlasov was brought to the positions of the corps" (quoted in "Neotvratimoye vozmezdiye" [Inevitable Retribution], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1973, pp 230-231).

You will agree that the version of Vlasov's arrest as set out in OGONEK has little in common with those events which actually occurred. Particularly if one considers that the traitor was caught not near Potsdam but rather on the territory of Czechoslovakia, to the southwest of Prague.

In her essay, A. Mirkina in commenting on the exceptional memory of G.K. Zhukov for faces and names, at the same time pointed out that inaccuracies had crept into the manuscript of the marshal's book. Here, as they say, there is nothing to be done as the human memory is an unreliable instrument. For this reason, in editing the book, Mirkina writes, it was essential to study the documents and maps of wartime, and clarify and check the facts. It is merely a pity that she did not do this in working on the essay. And the journal's workers who prepared the material for publishing should have been aware of just what name was involved and what a position they were putting both the people's hero and the magazine in. But certainly this is not the only one.

Thus, OGONEK in issue No. 20 of the same year has published one other memoir of Vladimir Lakshin on meetings with Hero of the Soviet Union, Army Gen A.V. Gorbato. In contrast to the first instance, where one might still dispute or guess whether Georgiy Konstantinovich Zhukov did talk about Vlasov's capture (and if he did, what precisely did he say), having read this essay, one is convinced that the author has assigned certain arguments to Gorbato. "Recalling the Stalingrad epoch," writes V. Lakshin, "Gorbato pointed out that the desperate, merciless resistance to the enemy started, in essence, on the last street running along the Volga. A thin threat separated the enemy from the river, but this thread was of steel. Here Stalin's rigid will, as they say, did its thing: he ordered that they transmit to the Army Commanders Chuykov and Yermenko that their heads would roll if they surrendered the city. Everyone realized that this was not an empty threat. But how sad it was that the most important elevation of the defenses, Malakhov Kurgan, was surrendered almost without a fight in order to then spend long weeks regaining it. How many lives were lost! How many soldiers!"

Why this attribution? Because Gen Gorbato, whose "just punctiliousness" is quite rightly emphasized by the author of the essay, clearly did not say any such words. As an active participant in the Stalingrad Battle, he would not call Mamayev Kurgan Malakhov (Malakhov Kurgan, as is known, is located in Sevastopol) and Yermenko was called an army commander while during that period he led the troops of the front. All these errors are to the author's conscience.

In the same issue of the journal, one can read the following. The poet Ye. Yevtushenko, in reading verses of young poets who were killed during the war, has written: "Possibly many of them would have remained alive had not so many of the best Red commanders been destroyed before the war, and if after the pompous easy victories we had not found ourselves almost with bare hands confronted with the armored snouts of the growling Nazi "tigers" which were already sniffing about in the Moscow suburbs."

Strongly put. But the question is that the Germans were in the "Moscow suburbs" in 1941 but the tigers appeared in the Wehrmacht significantly later. They were employed for the first time on a mass basis in the summer of 1943 on the Kursk Salient.

Well, so be it, poets, editors and critics are outsiders in the world of history. What demands should be made for them? Impressive and emotional, they will think up whatever and will write whatever! The historians, the so-called narrow specialists should be an example of a responsible attitude for checking the facts. But alas, the conclusion must be drawn that some of them do not bother themselves with this work.

On 21 June 1988, SOVETSKAYA KULTURA published a dialogue of Academician Aleksandr Samsonov and the journalist Edmund Iodkovskiy. The men, as they say incisively, "were brought together by joint work on an unusual book of readers' letters "Znat i pomnit" [Know and Remember] being prepared for publishing at Politizdat. These letters were selected from the letters received to articles by Academician A. Samsonov in the newspapers and journals.

The participants of the dialogue in their conversation quoted a letter by Ada Dmitriyevna Pavlova, the daughter of the former commander of the Western Special Military District, Army Gen D.G. Pavlov. She, in particular, recalled how in 1938 her father, the brother of Stalin's wife, Pavel Sergeyevich Alliluyev, and the then chief of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Artillery Directorate, G.I. Kulik, turned to Stalin with a "petition" about the unjustified repressions against the military. "We do not know," wrote Ada Dmitriyevna, "whether any trace of this approach to Stalin survives in the documents. But all its participants have perished: before the war Alliluyev and Kulik's wife; during the war Pavlov and Kulik. By the start of the war no one defended the repressed persons, that is, they knew that the price of this was their own life...."

In reading these lines, one asks the question why did Kulik's wife die as certainly she had not gone to Stalin. Even a naive reader certainly knows, it would be argued, that not only were the military leaders subjected to unjust repression but also the members of their families including wives, children and other relatives.

I must honestly confess that I do not know what was the fate of the spouse (more accurately, it is a question of the first wife) of Georgiy Ivanovich Kulik. Possibly, she did not escape the harsh fate of those who died innocently in the years of illegality but, it seems to me, that this would scarcely depend upon the approach of her husband to the "leader." Actually, before the war Kulik was not repressed. On the contrary, in 1940, he became Marshal of the Soviet Union and then was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

During the years of the Great Patriotic War, as is pointed out in the "Voyenny entsiklopedicheskiy slovar" [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary], G.I. Kulik was in command of the 54th Army (from August 1941), and was then with the People's Commissariat of Defense (from March 1942, holding the rank of major general and for unsuccessful troop leadership was broken in rank), in April-September 1943, he was in command of the 4th Guards Army and from January 1944, was the deputy chief of the Main Directorate for the Organization and Manning of the Soviet Army. One can learn in greater detail about the activities of G.I. Kulik during the war years from the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov mentioned here.

After the war G.I. Kulik was the deputy commander of a military district. It was precisely in this post that he was repressed and declared to be an enemy of the people. The life of G.I. Kulik ended in 1950. Subsequently he was completely rehabilitated. In 1957 he was restored to the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union (posthumously).

As for the second wife of G.I. Kulik, Olga Yakovlevna, she was not arrested. Only once, again in 1950, was she summoned by the minister of state security and proposed that she change the name of the "enemy of the people" for another. She rejected this proposal.

Olga Yakovlevna outlived her husband by almost a quarter of a century. At one time she taught English and for many years worked with Central Television. She died in 1974 and was buried at one of the cemeteries near Moscow.

This was the life of G.I. Kulik during the war and after it. Of course, a science associate from Minsk might not know all the vagaries of his, let us put it frankly, very complex fate. But this error should not have been overlooked by the journalist Edmund Iodkovskiy who quoted from the letter. And it is completely absurd to link the error with the name of the historian A. Samsonov. But we must. The letter was sent precisely to him, and it was he who provided it for publishing. Of course, he should have provided it with the corresponding commentaries.

"Znat i pomnit" is the title of the book which has been prepared by A. Samsonov and E. Iodkovskiy. One would like to believe that in it as in all other publications on historical subjects, it would be solely a question of the truth. We would hope that these publications were brought to life by a desire to understand and find the truth and not by a desire to entertain one's vain glory in a new fashionable endeavor.

P.S. Possibly, there will be people who feel my letter too harsh. But understand me correctly—I am tired of encountering in each publication unexpected interpretations by the authors and not simply errors.

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'Klim, Koba Said...'

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[Article, published under the heading "World War II,"
by Col O.F. Suvenirov, doctor of historical sciences:
"Klim, Koba Said..."]

[Text] The decades pass but there still is no lost pertinence to the question of why in the middle of the 20th Century with the rather high level of civilization achieved by that time, mankind was thrown into the bloody maw of world war.

For 6 long years, the flames of World War II raged on our planet. The armed conflict spread over the territories of 40 countries of Europe, Asia and Africa and into the expanses of the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian and Arctic Oceans. Only 6 states remained formally neutral. Some 72 states entered the war and these had a population of 1.7 billion persons, that is, around 80 percent of the entire world population at that time. The armies and navies mobilized some 110 million men. Just four belligerents—Germany, England (in 1939-1945), the United States and the USSR (in 1941-1945)—produced some 278,000 tanks, SAU [self-propelled artillery mount] and assault guns, 488,000 combat aircraft, over 1.74 million guns of all types and classes, around 6.2 million machine guns, over 37 millions and carbines and around 13.3 million machine pistols.

The harm caused to mankind in the course of World War II was enormous. Human losses were particularly severe. While some 3 million persons perished in all the wars of the 17th Century, 5.5 million persons in the 18th Century, and 16 million persons in the 19th Century, over the 6 years of World War II death took off approximately 55 million human lives, including up to 17 million on the fronts. Approximately 35 million persons were wounded and almost 25 million of them were disabled for the rest of their lives.

It can be said with complete justification that World War II was an unprecedented social cataclysm in the history of human society. For this reason the question of the reasons for the outbreak of World War II has attracted, does attract and will attract the closest attention of not only professional historians but also the broad masses of people.

Seemingly, now, when almost 50 years have passed since the start of World War II, the question of its genesis and primarily its causes, the direct and indirect guilty parties to a large degree is clear for each intelligent person. Nevertheless up to now this problem remains one of the most acute. An understanding of any and particularly a complex social phenomenon has always been a difficult matter.

A study of the last world war, aside from satisfying historical interest, is of truly colossal practical significance in the fight of all progressive mankind to prevent a third world war. Certainly it is impossible to fight effectively against the consequences of something without having disclosed and without considering the factors giving rise to them.

The history of World War II as a whole and the history of its origin, in particular, are a field of very acute ideological struggle. Reactionary bourgeois historiographers often resort to a direct falsification of the problem of the causality of World War II, in endeavoring above all to conceal the fact that imperialism was the only guilty party in unleashing it. But historical truth cannot be concealed.

Marxist historians, in being guided by Lenin's notion that the basic method for investigating the genesis of a war is to show "what is the class nature of a war, for what reasons this war broke out, what classes are waging it, and what historical and historical-economic conditions have caused it,"¹ have irrefutably shown that World War II was caused by the entire system of world imperialism and, in particular, its outbreak was brought about by the particular features in the development of capitalism in the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, they have persuasively shown that capitalism was also guilty in the annihilation of man by man.

On 11 November 1918, World War I was over. Hundreds of millions of people breathed freely in the hope of a final escape of the terrors of bloodshed. In the nations of the West the gun salutes roared and there were solemn church services. In endeavoring to satisfy the cherished aspirations of the broad masses of workers, the U.S. President W. Wilson and the English Prime Minister D. Lloyd George declared themselves to be pacifists, vowing to the people that from now on an end had been put to wars.

However, in time the falsity and hypocrisy of such assertions became apparent and it was clear that as long as imperialism existed, there would be a danger of wars, including world ones. And here it was not so much a question of the unrestrained greed and evil will of the exploiting classes, individual social groups or politicians as it was in the very nature of the imperialist system.

World War I led to a redistribution of colonies and spheres of influence of the Great Powers as set out in the Versailles-Washington system of treaties. France and Great Britain improved their positions on the world scene at the expense of Germany and its allies. But the contradictions of the capitalist system had in no way disappeared. As before, this was based upon an unmerciful exploitation of the working masses and the intense plundering of the peoples in colonies and semicolonies. "A situation resulted," said V.I. Lenin, "whereby seven-tenths of the world's population are in an enslaved position. These slaves are scattered throughout the world and have been delivered to the depredations of a handful of countries: England, France and Japan. This is why this entire international system and order which is held up by the Versailles Peace is sitting on a volcano...."²

History shows that even before the coming of the Nazis to power in Germany, international imperialism was intensely preparing for a new war to divide up the world and calculated at the same time to destroy the Soviet Union. During those years these preparations were carried out along the most diverse lines: political, diplomatic, economic and ideological. Thus, according to the data of the Berlin Market Studies Institute obtained as a result of investigating the military budgets of 53 nations, the index of world products, if the 1928 figures are taken as 100 percent, were 54 in 1913 and not over 56 percent

in 1932. At the same time, the index of world expenditures on weapons production rose from 64 percent in 1913 to 107 percent in 1932.

The growth of militarism in the West was aided by the fact that in the course of World War I many decisive positions in political life of the belligerents had been seized by the military. In entering into a close alliance with the monopolists, even in the 1920s they were employing the entire arsenal of bourgeois ideology for preparing for a new war, going into the areas of law, philosophy and religion, ethics and aesthetics. In distorting the entire course of the development of human society, in falsifying the history of World War I and, in particular, in incorrectly answering the question concerning its instigators, the inveterate and newly-appeared imperialist warmongers in every possible way instilled a cult of war and the army, nationalism and racism and geopolitical ideas; they conducted extensive colonial propaganda and fanned the flames of militaristic, revanchist passions. Particular attention was given to restoring the military-economic potential of Germany. Already in 1929, "13 countries including France, China, Spain and Belgium informed the League of Nations that Germany was their main supplier of weapons and ammunition."³

All the ideological preparations for a new war were based upon anticommunism and primarily anti-Sovietism. There was not a single absurd and monstrous accusation which the Western zealots of Western "prosperity" did not level against the world's first socialist state. But the favorite for them during those years were the fabrications about "Red militarism of the Soviet Union" and numerous variations on the theme "the Russians are coming" repeated, unfortunately, now by certain politicians from the ranks of the bourgeoisie.

The greatest crime of imperialism to mankind was that precisely it gave rise to such a loathsome social phenomenon as Naziism. In the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, outright fascist or semifascist regimes were established in many European countries. In 1922, the fascists came to power in Italy, and in January 1930, the Nazis in Germany. In various countries fascism had its specific traits but everywhere assumed the form of an outright terroristic dictatorship closely collaborating with the most reactionary chauvinistic circles of financial capital.

Presently, many politicians and ideologists in the West are endeavoring to distance themselves from the fascist atrocities, they are writing about the "phenomenon of fascism" and the "miraculous force of Hitler and Mussolini" and are endeavoring by any ways and means are to conceal from the broad masses of the people that precisely imperialism gave rise to fascism. For example, the Italian Fascists when they were seeking power made all sorts of noise about a "march on Rome," but all their actions were, in essence, a government-sanctioned faking designed for the faint-of-heart. The then Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Army, Gen P. Badoglio, stated at

that time: "If the fascists break the law I promise to immediately restore order. Five minutes of fire and everything will be in order."^{3a} However, the Italian imperialists were supporting the Fascists not to shoot at them: on 29 October 1922, King Victor Emmanuel instructed Mussolini to form a new government.

There was no need for Hitler to threaten anyone with a "march on Berlin." Hitler's Naziism was invited to power by the German imperialists. "We have hired him," said one of the prominent representatives of German monopolistic capital, F. Papen, frankly about Hitler. The coming to power of the Nazis in Germany had fatal consequences not only for the German people but also for all mankind and became a turning point in the process of the genesis of World War II.

A careful study of the documents of those years convincingly confirms that specific social groups, organizations and persons carried out systematic, planned, all-encompassing, intense and energetic preparations for World War II. This sinister alliance included monopolists, Nazis and representatives of the military circles. World War II was maturing in the heart of capitalism over a period of 2 decades. We can establish two stages in the preparations for the war. The first was the stage of the rise of the war and covers the time from 1918 until the autumn of 1935. The second was the stage of direct preparations and unleashing of the war and lasted from the autumn of 1935 until 1 September 1939.

In the course of the first stage, the centers of the new world war arose: in the Far East due to imperialistic Japan (at the beginning of the 1930s) and in the center of Europe in Italy and Germany (in the first half of the 1930s). Preparations for the future war were carried out by the imperialists of various countries even before the formation of its main centers and these created a system of effective and coordinated actions and measures encompassing all spheres of social life but precisely with the appearance of the centers of war the danger of it became particularly clear. The second stage was characterized by the moving of European fascism to outright aggression in Ethiopia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Albania and by a further intensification of Japanese aggression in China. This ended after the attack by Nazi Germany on Poland which marked the start to World War II.

At first, the fascist-imperialist warmongers operated in isolation, endeavoring to ensure only their own interests. But in time the nations of the fascist-militaristic bloc began to realize that the plans being hatched by them for world domination would require the legal underpinnings of a political union of partners. For this reason, on 25 November 1936, Germany and Japan signed the "Anti-Comintern Pact" and a year later, on 6 November, Italy joined it.

Nazi Germany made a strong effort to turn the "Anti-Comintern Pact" with Japan and Italy into a real trilateral military alliance aimed both against the USSR and against the main imperialist rivals. When in October 1938, Hitler proposed concluding a trilateral military pact, Mussolini warmly approved this idea, replying to this as follows: "We should not conclude a purely defensive alliance. There is no need for this, for no one would ever think to attack the totalitarian states. We should conclude an alliance in order to redraw the geographic map of the world. For this we must set out a plan and objects of conquest."⁴

The conclusion of the triple military pact did not come about at that time due to the particular position of Japan and explained by the fact that a majority of the members of the Japanese Cabinet assumed that because of the conditions which arose in the spring of 1939 in Europe, it was essential to refrain from concluding a military pact. Here one of the main reasons for the difference of opinion was the differing approach of the German and Japanese leadership to the question of who should be attacked first. Japan insisted on an immediate joint attack on the USSR and refused to conclude an alliance which envisaged a war first against England, France and the United States. Only on 10 August 1939, after more than 70 sessions of the Japanese "Five Ministers Council" in Berlin, was a message sent on Japan's agreement to sign a treaty of military alliance with the European "Axis Powers." But Nazi Germany, steadily viewing the Soviet Union as its main enemy, at that moment considered it better for itself strategically to launch the blow against England and France first. It refrained from responding to the Japanese proposal and secretly from its Asian ally set out on a course of concluding a nonaggression treaty with the Soviet Union. The truth about the signing of the latter was a complete surprise for the Japanese government and led to its fall.

This is why Germany had to limit itself to concluding a bilateral military agreement with Italy and this was called the "Pact of Steel" and signed on 22 May 1939 in Berlin. The danger of the unleashing of World War II in Europe increased sharply. The assault forces of imperialism were wagering everything on one card. This was, in Lenin's expression, "completely Iago imperialism,"⁵ which had repeatedly shown that it would stop at nothing.

The ruling classes and bourgeois parties of England, France and the United States were guilty of the fact that they had assumed a position of conniving with fascism and actually supporting its aggressive plans and actions. We would merely like to draw the reader's attention to the fact of how the English and French governments connived with the most brazen plunderous actions of the fascists and militarists. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria and the barbarous Italian attack on Abyssinia went unpunished. In March 1936, actions were commenced by the main predator: German troops entered

the Rhineland. Gen Jodl recalled subsequently: "I should merely testify that the French Cover Army could literally have blown us away."⁶

The notorious policy of nonintervention into Spanish events was in reality one of the most hypocritical and demagogic forms of connivance for aggression and a convenient screen for concealing the actual military aid to Franco's rebels by the fascist aggressors. As was correctly written by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Republic J. Alvarez del Vayo, "nonintervention" in reality was "true direct and immediate intervention in favor of the rebels."⁷

The next victim of the Nazis was Czechoslovakia, a country with highly developed industry and which the Germans had long dreamed of possessing. However, the Western powers were not intending to aid it, on the contrary, through various intermediaries pressure was applied to the government of this state in the aim of forcing it to concede the Sudetenland to Nazi Germany. At the height of the Czechoslovak crisis, Chamberlain twice made humiliating pilgrimages to Hitler and then through diplomatic channels transmitted his demands to his ambassador in Prague.

The English Foreign Secretary Halifax on 24 September 1938 presented to the Czechoslovak Ambassador to England J. Masaryk a "memorandum" received by Chamberlain from Hitler's hands and in fact this was a second ultimatum. "Masaryk asked Halifax what had been the role of your prime minister in terms of this 'memorandum' and to this Halifax replied: 'only a mailman.' 'Should I understand this in the sense that the British prime minister has turned himself into a messenger for Hitler's murderers and plunderers?' asked Masaryk. Befuddled, Halifax murmured: 'If you like, yes.' And with this the conversation ended."⁸

England and France finally betrayed Czechoslovakia when Chamberlain and Daladier on 29 September 1938 arrived at the Munich Conference for talks with Hitler and Mussolini. Without the participation of Czechoslovak representatives, the four Western Powers concluded an agreement which obliged this country to give up to Germany one-fifth of its territory, the Sudetenland, as well as satisfy the territorial claims by the governments of Horthy Hungary and bourgeois Poland. The Soviet Union had been purposely bypassed at the Munich Conference.

The Munich Agreement was an imperialistic "diktat" which flagrantly violated international treaties and international law. Even certain English authors recognize that this agreement was the "greatest moral defeat suffered by England in the 20th Century." Hitler himself was stunned when he realized with what ease Chamberlain England and Daladier France surrendered Czechoslovakia to him "for pillage and plunder." "Would you think," said Adolf Hitler in a conversation with the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Csaky on 16

January 1939, "that I myself 6 months ago considered it possible that Czechoslovakia would be presented to me on a platter by its friends? I did not believe that England and France would enter a war but I was convinced that Czechoslovakia would be destroyed by military means. What happened could occur only once in history. We can congratulate one another with all our heart."⁹

In describing the situation which existed in Europe after the Munich Conspiracy, the Soviet Ambassador to England I.M. Mayskiy justly wrote: "The League of Nations and collective security are dead. In international relations an age has come of the cruelest rampage of brute force and a policy of an armored fist."¹⁰

Thus, in 1939, the balance of forces on the international scene was determined rather clearly. One group of major imperialist states—Germany, Italy and Japan—had openly declared their desire for world domination, it was conducting local aggressive wars and intensely preparing for a major war. Another group of states which had kept a bourgeois democratic system (this included France, Great Britain and the United States), while in words welcoming passivism, actually in every possible way encouraged predatory actions by the fascist-militaristic bloc, in endeavoring to direct the brunt of aggression against the Soviet Union.

Even then a question of exceptional acuteness confronted the honest people of the world: is the approaching new world war fatally inevitable? Can it still be prevented?

The role of the USSR in the struggle to organize collective security, for preventing aggression and for organizing a united rebuff to the torch bearers of a new world war is hard to overestimate, so great was it. However, regardless of all the efforts of the Soviet Union, the Comintern and the international antiwar movement, it was impossible to prevent World War II due to a number of well-known factors of an objective and subjective nature. The scope of the given article does not make it possible to examine all of them in detail and for this reason the author considers it advisable to take up in it a number of questions which are less well known to a broad range of readers and which also relate to the given subject of this article.

Thus, under the concrete historical conditions of the eve of World War II, for preventing it it was essential to have a combining of efforts of the USSR and the bourgeois democratic states of the West. At the talks with England and France which began in March 1939 and continued until the last 10 days of August, the USSR took every measure to achieve a political and military agreement in the event of a Nazi attack. The British government refused any concrete obligations to aid the Soviet Union at the moment of a possible Nazi aggression. At the very time that the British and French representatives were drawing out the talks in Moscow, a series of secret talks was held between the emissaries of Great Britain and

Nazi Germany. In the course of the latter they discussed a variation of a new meeting similar to Munich for a conspiracy against Poland. At the same time, the talks conducted in Moscow from 12 through 21 August 1939 between the military delegations of the USSR, England and France did not produce any specific results.

After the final breakdown of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet talks in Moscow (22-23 August 1939), aggression by Nazi Germany against Poland became virtually inevitable. And precisely this action marked the start to World War II.

At present, in the process of restructuring and the switch to new thinking, the need has arisen of decisively repudiating many obsolete stereotypes, and the time has come to endeavor more objectively to answer the question of why the 1939 August talks in Moscow ended with a complete failure. In analyzing this, in my view, it is essential to take three considerations into account.

In the first place, in the designated period there was no great interest on the part of the English and French governments in concluding a military alliance with the USSR. Many Soviet historians have correctly pointed out that certain representatives from the English and French ruling circles wanted to employ these talks merely as a means for pressurizing Germany so that it would make certain concessions to the Western countries. But there was also something else. Unfortunately, it must be admitted that due to a number of factors, and primarily to the mass terror which had broken out in our state, the foreign policy authority of the USSR by that time had declined sharply. Many Western politicians, having analyzed the domestic situation in the Soviet nation, ceased believing that the Soviet Union was capable of becoming a dependable ally and that the Red Army could represent a major military force. Certainly the bloody purge of the military personnel conducted in 1937-1938 under the direct leadership of Voroshilov and Yezhov led to the elimination and often the physical death of a predominant majority of the superior and a significant portion of the senior and middle-level command, political and supervisory personnel and, in essence, decapitated the Red Army. The article "The Fortune and Death of Tukhachevskiy" published in the German newspaper DEUTSCHE WEHR on 24 June 1937 commented: "Having executed these very prominent military leaders of the Soviet Union, they have consciously sacrificed battleworthiness and leadership of the Red Army for the sake of politics. Tukhachevskiy undoubtedly, was the most outstanding of all the Red commanders and he cannot be replaced.... The supposed espionage, of course, has merely been thought up. If the Bolsheviks assert that the 'accused have confessed' to this, it is, of course, a lie."

And here is the response of certain circles in Poland and France. On 14 July 1937, GAZETA POLSKA published material under the title "Prominent French Officer on Danger of Alliance With Soviets" which pointed out that

the rightist French newspaper L'EPOQUE had published an article by Rene Tournier, one of the prominent representatives of the French General Staff during World War I and the former military attache in Berlin and who warned of the danger which supposedly threatened France if it would conclude a military alliance with the USSR. "The Tukhachevskiy affair," this general wrote, "reminds the French public...of an alliance with the Soviets which the supporters of communism favor. However, either Tukhachevskiy and his group were rightly condemned for treason, then one must realize there is an army in which the commanders are capable of committing such a crime, or this group of commanders has not given away any secrets to the Germans, then what respect can there be for a government which destroys the command personnel merely because it has its own political opinion.... In light of recent events occurring in the USSR, the French Staff could not be certain that important plans would not be turned over to the Germans." As the reader can judge, there was a certain logic in the words of the French general. And this reasonable judgment was voiced at the very outset of the monstrous campaign to eradicate the nonexistent, falsified "anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary Trotskyite-Bukharin spy conspiracy in the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army]." Is it any wonder that in those years class mistrust on the part of the English and French representatives for everything Soviet increased sharply.

Secondly, in analyzing Soviet foreign policy in the second half of the 1930s, it is high time to get free of a number of stereotypes drawn from the reference "Falsifiers of History" published in 1948. All Marxists readily admit that foreign policy is basically determined by domestic policy, but many of them for some reason forget to consider here that all Soviet domestic policy in the prewar period was carried out under the pressure of the cult of personality and, consequently, suffered from major distortions. This could not help but be reflected in the foreign policy actions of the state. The most important, truly fatal decisions were taken in Camera, behind the back of the party and even its Central Committee. And although historians have yet to gain access to all the documents of the Stalin period, nevertheless, having studied the already published materials, it can be concluded that the then leadership of the Soviet Union headed by Stalin had done far from everything possible to achieve the concluding of a military convention with France and England.

On 27 August 1939, when the English and French military missions had already departed Moscow, the newspaper PRAVDA published an interview with the head of the Soviet military mission K.Ye. Voroshilov in which he stated: "The military talks with England and France have not been broken off because the USSR concluded a nonaggression pact with Germany but, on the contrary, the USSR has concluded a nonaggression pact with Germany as a result of the circumstance, among others, that the military talks with France and

England were stalemated over insurmountable differences." The minutes of the conversation between Voroshilov and the head of the French military mission Gen Doumenc published in England in 1954 and in 1971 also in the USSR shows that in actuality everything was somewhat different.

The mentioned conversation took place on 22 August 1939. In the course of it Gen Doumenc stated that the French government had given him "the right to sign a military convention where it would be stated that permission was to be provided to allow Soviet troops to pass through at those points where you yourselves determine, that is, through the Vilen Corridor, and if need be in accord with the specific conditions, also passage through Galicia and Romania."¹¹ Seemingly, the long-awaited agreement of the French had finally been obtained for establishing a unified military alliance against the Nazi aggressors. This was no accident. Certainly on the day of the talk the Soviet press had come out with an announcement on the forthcoming arrival "in the next few days" of von Ribbentrop in Moscow for talks to conclude the nonaggression pact. And Doumenc asked Voroshilov point-blank: "Is you are desirous of making progress quickly on this matter and sign a military convention, because I have come precisely for this purpose and see that time is passing."¹² However, the head of the Soviet military mission under various pretexts refused a direct answer to this question, having stated that the French and English sides had long drawn out the political and military talks and now it was essential to wait a bit, for "it is not to be excluded that during this time certain political events could occur."¹³ Thus, a rather clear hint was given that the Soviet side had taken a decision not to resume the military talks with England and France and the concluding of a nonaggression treaty with Germany was a foregone conclusion. Proof of this is the text of a note from Poskrebyshhev (Stalin's assistant) given to Voroshilov by Poskrebyshhev's aide during one of the sessions of the military missions: "Klim [Voroshilov], Koba [Stalin] said that you have really been cranking out the same old song."¹⁴ As for the Soviet-German Nonaggression Treaty of 23 August 1939, a predominant majority of Soviet historians has assumed that this was a forced step, the only one possible under those conditions, due to which the anti-Soviet imperialist alliance was upset. In this manner the Soviet Union, in their opinion, avoided a war on two fronts. In addition, it was possible to gain a good deal of time for strengthening the nation's defense capability. In these arguments there is more than a grain of the rational, but, in my view, they suffer from definite one-sidedness.

I feel that it is completely wrong to consider that the concluding of the treaty with Germany was the only reasonable and possible decision for the Soviet government in that situation. There are always alternatives in any historical process. As was already pointed out, the alternative of concluding a military convention with France was not excluded. There could also have been other variations. Stalin was deciding and did decide

autocratically. But still there are historians who, knowing what a fatal role was played by this treaty, continue to assert that its concluding was a wise step.

Thirdly, having studied the main state and military documents of Japan and Germany, one can scarcely agree now that in August 1939, the Soviet Union was threatened by the real threat of a war on two fronts. It could have seemed that way to Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov in the prewar times. But we now know that Japan did not intend to attack the USSR even during the most critical moments of 1941 and 1942, when our country was in a desperate situation. Nazi Germany in 1939 did not have a concrete plan for waging war against the USSR. As for the tone of ultimatum in the telegram from Hitler to Stalin on the immediate concluding of the pact, it is now clear that, being a political intriguer, the Fuhrer stopped short of nothing, choosing his means, and often bluffed.

By the autumn of 1939, the German Wehrmacht was not ready for a world war. Regardless of feverish efforts, German industry during this period depended largely on the importing of raw materials from overseas. Germany imported 50 percent of the lead consumed in the state, 80 percent of the rubber, 90 percent of the tin and 95 percent of the nickel. For copper this figure was 70 percent and for bauxite 99 percent. The Third Reich purchased virtually all its petroleum in other countries.¹⁵ The arming of the German Armed Forces by 1 September 1939 was inferior to ours. The Wehrmacht was armed with 3,195 tanks and 3,646 completely ready combat aircraft. Accurate information on the number of all the tanks and aircraft in our army at that time, as far as I know, has still not been published. But we can judge this from indirect data. As is known, at the talks of the military missions in Moscow, in August 1939, the Chief of the RKKA General Staff, Army Commander 1st Rank B.M. Shaposhnikov reported on the possibility and readiness of the Soviet Union within 8-20 days to field against aggressive forces in Europe some 136 infantry and cavalry divisions. We would point out that the Wehrmacht in 1939, even after mobilization, had only 102 infantry, tank and other divisions and prior to the mobilization just 51. Just in the first line our troops had from 5,000 to 5,500 combat aircraft including bombers and fighters (not counting the auxiliary aviation and not counting the reserve) and 9,000-10,000 tanks.¹⁶ Thus, in August 1939, the Red Army, although very weakened by the Stalin-Voroshilov repressions, was still a significant fighting force which was not inferior to the Wehrmacht and in terms of the number of weapons surpassed it. By June 1941, the RKKA to a large degree had fallen behind it in combat might and capabilities. Thus, the result of the treaty of 23 August 1939 was not an improvement but rather a deterioration in the ratio of combat capabilities between the RKKA and the Wehrmacht.

The genesis of World War II is very complicated and this process is far from as simple as it seems in the exposition of certain historians. The source of this war was world

imperialism. The main and immediate guilty party for its preparation and unleashing was the Nazi-militaristic bloc and particularly Nazi Germany. The prewar policies of the bourgeois democratic states of England, France and the United States did not withstand the test posed by history. Here the fatal role was played by its anti-Soviet focus. The Soviet Union was struggling unstintingly against the threat of a new world war, but the cult of personality which existed at that time in the nation did not make it possible to fully utilize the peace-loving and antiwar potential of the socialist state.

The prevention of World War III is an immediate task which must be carried out by mankind at the present stage.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 32, p 77.
2. Ibid., Vol 41, p 353.
3. R.I.G. Sesyuli, "Fabenidustri" [Farbenindustrie], translated from the English, Moscow, 1948, p 104.
- 3.a P. Nenni, "Six ans de guerre Civile en Italie," Paris, 1929, p 146.
4. "l'Europa verso la catastrofe," Milan, 1948, p 378.
5. V.I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 42, p 63.
6. Quoted in: D. Melnikov, L. Chernaya, "Prestupnik nomer 1. Natsistskiy rezhim i yeto fyurer" [The Number-One Criminal. The Nazi Regime and Its Fuhrer], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 1981, p 270.
7. J. Alvarez del Vayo, "L'Espagne accuse," Paris, 1937, p 14.
8. "Dokumenty vneshney politiki SSSR" [Documents of Soviet Foreign Policy], Moscow, Politizdat, Vol XXI, 1977, p 526.
9. "Dokumenty ministerstva inostrannykh del Germanii" [Documents of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs], No 1, "German Policy in Hungary (1937-1942)," Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1946, pp 89-90.
10. "Dokumenty vneshney politiki SSSR," Vol 21, p 557.
11. "SSSR v borbe za mir nakanune vtoroy mirovoy voyny (sentyabr 1938 g.—)" [The USSR in the Struggle for Peace on the Eve of World War II (1938-August 1939)], Documents and Materials, Moscow, Politizdat, 1971, p 631.
12. Ibid., p 632.
13. Ibid., p 634.

14. Related by Doctor of Historical Sciences, Prof V. Dashichev on 19 May 1988 at a roundtable at the Institute of Universal History of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

15. "Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht," Frankfurt a/M., Vol 1, 1965, p 53-E.

16. See: "SSSR v borbe...", pp 574, 607.

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Prague and the Military Conspiracy Case

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ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 88 (signed to press
23 Nov 88) pp 61-69

[Article, published under the heading "Viewpoints, Judgments, Versions," by I. Pfaff: "Prague and the Military Conspiracy Case"; conclusion of the series, for previous installments see Issue Nos 10, 11 of this journal for 1988]

[Text] Possibly, precisely the stubborn desire on the part of Czechoslovak foreign policy to put into effect at any price an alliance with the Soviet Union¹ explains why even the [Czech] High Command did not view the elimination of Tukhachevskiy and the Soviet officer corps from the very outset as causing serious damage to the Red Army. At least, Gen Krejci, the Czechoslovak chief of the General Staff, even in August 1937 endeavored to persuade the French Secret Service that "France has a poor knowledge of Russia" and that the Soviet Army (can go through a gloomy phase and still remain a force of great significance."² Only the flood of repression against the entire Soviet officer corps and above all the terror which seized the Czechoslovak military delegation which was sent to the USSR for studying the state of the Red Army's defense capability and returned at the end of October 1937 with extremely alarming news surpassing even the worst expectations created panic fear for the consequences of the army purges. Fears were voiced on the internal decomposition of the Red Army and the weakening of its combat capability and readiness. Concern was even voiced over its ability to conduct offensive actions, over tactical and strategic inexperience of the newly appointed young commanders, when during a single night lieutenants in thousands became regimental commanders and majors became divisional commanders. At the same time the Czechoslovak military delegation noted the weaknesses in troop command and on questions of strategy and tactics, the backward level of armament and equipment, and the lack of special weapons, particularly those developed considering recent technical achievements and which had long been incorporated in the Czechoslovak Army.³

Upon direct instructions of Benes, Prague feverishly endeavored after this and right up to the autumn of 1938 to restore the greatly shaken combat might of the Soviet Army by major deliveries of special weapons produced

by the Czechoslovak military industry. Even in June 1938, the USSR concluded with the Skoda plants a contract for the delivery of lacking heavy weapons in accord with the conclusion and recommendations of the despairing Prague General Staff.⁴ On 21 January 1938, an agreement was signed in Moscow on deliveries of Czechoslovak 205-mm cannons, 310-mm howitzers and anti-aircraft cannons as well as equipment for producing artillery guns. On 2 February 1938, the Skoda plants concluded a new contract which took up the providing of licenses for the production equipment of the Soviet defense industry.⁵ On 6 April 1938, a Soviet delegation headed by Mar Kulik conducted talks in Prague on tank and mortar production for the USSR as well as on Czechoslovak involvement in building the fortifications on the Soviet western frontier.⁶ "If this was not tragic, it was at least rather strange that we, a small threatened state, were forced to weaken our own military potential in order to arm and modernize the army of our major ally," wrote the Deputy Chief of the Czechoslovak General Staff, Gen Fiala.⁷ In the most important area, on the questions of the unpreparedness and inexperience of the new commanders, Czechoslovakia could not, of course, undertake anything, as it was incapable of sending hundreds of officers to the Soviet Union.

It is worthy of note that Benes had a session of the Higher State Defense Council on 3 November 1937 precisely over the question of the army purges stated that the USSR was focusing its interests on the questions of domestic life and was moving into the background or to an alternate route the foreign policy problems which it must take up.⁸ At a conference of the representatives of the Czechoslovak and Soviet military intelligence services held during the period from 5 through 8 December 1937 in Prague, there was a stormy clash with the Soviet delegations over the question of the guilt of Tukhachevskiy. The Czechoslovak representatives insistently pointed out how strongly the purges had weakened the battleworthiness and might of the Red Army and moreover as a consequence of accusations which the entire world considered wrong. The Soviet representatives argued irritably, stating that their Czechoslovak colleagues in no way were competent to assess the proof of Tukhachevskiy's guilt and refused further discussion of the given question, having pointed out here that the "documents" accusing Tukhachevskiy had come from Prague.⁹ In this context it must be recalled that the purges did not remain without consequence for the personnel of the group of the Soviet intelligence service in Czechoslovakia: during the period from August through October 1937, called back were its leader (who had worked in this position starting in 1936), Lt Col Porubovskiy, as well as three members of the Soviet mission and they were replaced by Lt Col Klimtsov, Maj Lyakhovskiy and Capts Andreyev and Smigelskiy.¹⁰

As a manifestation of the doubts and hesitation in Czechoslovak foreign policy vis-a-vis Moscow after the army purges, one must also consider that, regardless of the Soviet efforts, until the end of 1937, there was

neither Litvinov's trip to Prague nor Krofta's trip to Moscow, although the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee Politburo on 24 May 1937 strongly recommended their holding.¹¹ Also noteworthy in this regard was the growing restraint of the Prague General Staff. As was learned by the German Mission from the White emigre Ukrainian circles in Prague, particularly from their leading party figure Makarenko who maintained good relations with highly-placed Czechoslovak officers and at times was even received by Benes, the Czechoslovak General Staff after the Soviet purges purportedly lost its confidence in the Red Army leadership. For this reason, on 22 January 1938, it rejected a proposal by the Soviet General Staff to establish a joint commission to test out the plans for the defenses of both states. The fears on the part of the Czechoslovak General Staff that Tukhachevskiy possibly in fact had had contacts with the Germans and the fear that this danger could again occur on the Soviet side clearly forced the leadership of the Czechoslovak Army not to disclose to the Soviet Union "certain secrets in the operational plan and armaments of Czechoslovakia as well as the mobilization plans and the most advanced aviation engines."¹² These proposals characterized the general atmosphere of mistrust on the part of Czechoslovakia after the Tukhachevskiy affair, although individual data in this report on Prague's efforts to modernize the Soviet Army must, of course, be taken critically.

From mid-December 1937, Czechoslovak doubts in this area were further strengthened by the warnings of Western observers on the insufficient reliability of the Red Army and its problematic combat capability as these coincided with the assessment in Prague. These warnings for the first time in a categorical form could be heard at the end of November from Chamberlain¹³ the doubts of whom several weeks later were confirmed in Prague by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Delbos.¹⁴ At the beginning of May 1938, the English Foreign Secretary Halifax tried to persuade the Czech Ambassador to London Jan Masaryk that the purges had reduced the combat capability of the Red Army and made very problematic its contribution to a possible war against Germany. Here Halifax did not forget to add that Soviet aid as a consequence of this would be either completely useless or at best end up ineffective.¹⁵ The American ambassador in Paris in May 1938 also drew the attention of one Czechoslovak diplomat to the fact that it was extremely unclear just how the weakened Soviet Army could endure a war.¹⁶ At the end of June 1938, Benes's confidant Hubert Ripka who had been sent by the nation's president to London was warned not only by the representatives of government circles but also by Churchill and the leaders of the Labor Party who stated that Czechoslovakia could not rely on the Soviet Army as it was in the process of "disintegration" and could not be compared with the German Army even in technical terms.¹⁷

Finally, it is quite striking that Benes, when he set off the Tukhachevskiy affair, without having first shown the

above-indicated "documents" to the Czechoslovak military intelligence service which, without any doubt, would have disclosed them as forgeries, gave not the slightest thought to what the consequences of his actions might have on the strength of the Franco-Soviet alliance. The experienced diplomat whose abilities and the capacity to predict the future development of events had been repeatedly shown in practice did not even take it into his head that the French response to his "discovery" might not correspond to his intentions.

The Tukhachevskiy affair caused profound disquiet in French policy and led to a severe crisis in French relations with the Soviet ally and even to the freezing of Franco-Soviet relations. Some 2 days after the execution of eight generals, Ambassador Coulondre visited Litvinov in order to explain to him the "lamentable impression" which had arisen in countries friendly to the Soviet Union as a consequence of the "fierce reprisals" and to ascertain how "they should view the spy charges brought against the generals." Litvinov referred Coulondre to the published accusation and sentence and added that the liquidation of the Germanophile group in the Red Army leadership should "be beneficial" to Franco-Soviet relations.

Some 2 weeks after this, Coulondre repeated his viewpoint to Potemkin and here he emphasized that France, naturally, was profoundly concerned by this case and demanded accurate data "as to what degree the executed officers were involved in a conspiracy with Germany." Potemkin merely referred to the fact that the generals had wanted to organize a state coup and enter an alliance with Germany.¹⁸

Both replies could scarcely lessen French concern. In France itself the purge had strengthened the position of the opponents of the Franco-Soviet Treaty and hardened the opinion that the Soviet Union was unable to provide France with armed air.¹⁹ In governmental circles fears began to be voiced that the French information data being turned over to the Soviet Union could fall into the hands of the Germans.²⁰ The French government under the influence of the "stunning" impression from the announcements from Moscow canceled the talks planned for the end of the spring of 1937 between the general staffs. Even Paul Reynaud who was exceptionally friendly toward the Soviet Union expressed his "extreme indignation" and the socialist press spoke about "terrors and fears." The French General Staff proposed an alternative: either the condemned are guilty and then any military secret would become known to the Germans or the condemned were innocent and the USSR was governed by mad men who permit the execution of their best generals.²¹

That the Soviet hopes on an alliance with France were not to be justified was explained by the German Ambassador in Moscow Count Schulenburg, in December 1937 by the fact that "among many French influential figures, as a consequence of the domestic political development

in the Soviet Union and the state of weakness caused by this there has been a strong sobering up in the position toward the Soviet ally.²² The diplomatic correspondence from Moscow, particularly the messages of the French military attaché, indicates that foreign observers were very quick to spot the ongoing and systematic nature of the army purges and their inevitable consequences for the command structure of the Red Army.²³ The French ambassador to London at the end of June 1937, informed Paris that the English government had received information from a reliable source on secret talks between the German General Staff and the Soviet military leaders.²⁴ Even on the eve of the Munich crisis, the English ambassador in Moscow left no doubt that the followers of those who had been eliminated in the Red Army would not themselves be removed "in such an alarmingly rapid order."²⁵

The French public did not find any justification for the bloody reprisals in Moscow and did not believe at all in the evidence for the sentences. From this affair the conclusion was drawn that the Red Army, if its leadership could carry out such crimes, could possess only limited battleworthiness and serious fears were expressed that secret, vitally important French military information could be turned over to Germany, if the spy accusations were just.²⁶ The unanimous opinion was voiced that the army purge had caused great harm to the international authority of the Soviet Union and had provided grounds for valid doubts as to the value of the Franco-Soviet Treaty. If Tukhachevskiy were guilty, then how could France then be an ally of betrayed Russia. Or, if the charges were unsound then how could France then be an ally of a terrible tyranny.²⁷ When in mid-April 1938, the German ambassador to Paris gave a generally negative conclusion on the effectiveness of the Franco-Soviet alliance, he aptly expressed the impression which the army purges in the Soviet Union had caused in France in the following words: "Over the last year this has been joined by major doubts as to the stability of the Soviet regime, the might of the Red Army and the good will of the Soviet government. The execution of the generals who were considered highly skilled officers in the French General Staff...showed the dubiousness of the regime the prominent leaders of which, according to its own assertions, for many years have engaged in sabotage and treachery. Under these circumstances the question has frequently been raised of whether the Soviet Union, with the current political and military situation, is a proper and reliable ally."²⁸

Like Chamberlain, Chautemps had a very low regard for the USSR as an ally; in his eyes the mutual aid treaty after the Stalinist purges in the army had lost its military significance.²⁹ At the autumn French troop maneuvers conducted in 1937, regardless of the interest shown, no Soviet delegation was invited; the intrinsic function of the alliance from the viewpoint of the French side was only to serve as an obstacle for a German-Soviet rapprochement.³⁰ Not only under Chautemps but also under the government of Blum's popular front, French

alienation was so great that in the Soviet Union they did not expect anything more from even Blum.³¹ And Blum, as is known, was directly informed by Benes. These Soviet assumptions had already been confirmed by Litvinov's unsuccessful trip to Paris in May 1937. His efforts to broaden the content of the treaty and which Reynaud had constantly been demanding on the French side³² were unsuccessful, since Blum "had no intention of developing the mutual aid treaty."³³ The only possibility of achieving success which Blum would permit was a rapprochement and active collaboration between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Thus, Litvinov's visit to Paris could lead to the starting point for a new initiative in Franco-Soviet relations only with English support, but such agreement was not forthcoming from London.

The actual freezing of relations between France and the USSR was expressed even more vividly during the trip of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Delbos to the capitals of the Eastern European allies of France in December 1937. Delbos visited Warsaw, Bucharest, Belgrad and Prague, however he pointedly did not travel to Moscow, although Litvinov in November in Brussels had urgently invited him to Moscow.³⁴ In Moscow this gesture not unjustly was viewed as an expression of the "indecisive, evasive trend of French policy which could be explained solely by the anti-Soviet orientation and growing devaluing of the Franco-Soviet Treaty on mutual aid," and condemned as a "new indication of the attempts to denounce the treaty."³⁵ German diplomacy saw in the decision of Paris not to extend the talks of Delbos with France's allies to the Soviet Union as the humiliating and isolating of Soviet policy³⁶; Schulenburg characterized the impression which was created in Moscow as a consequence of the rejection of Litvinov's invitation, as "punctiliousness" and "dissatisfaction" and as a feeling of "being bypassed" which was all the more weighty since precisely after the meeting between Halifax and Hitler on 19 November, "of course, Moscow gave particular importance to the visit of Delbos."³⁷

Coulondre as well pointed out that the actions of French foreign policy "can in no way improve Franco-Soviet relations and restore confidence."³⁸ Some 2 months after this unharmonious musical accompaniment to the Eastern European trip by Delbos, the Czechoslovak ambassador in Paris was awaiting from the second Chautemps government after its formation a "decisive disengagement from Soviet Russia."³⁹ And some 9 days after the Austrian Anschluss, he drew attention to the desire of Flanders to achieve a reorientation of French policy relative to the alliance with the Soviet Union.⁴⁰ Naturally, Benes had no desire to bring about such a situation when he on 10 May 1937, by his message to Blum put into motion powerful waves in France aimed against the treaty with Moscow. When in the spring of 1938 he was confronted with the ruins of the Paris—Moscow—Prague "axis" which had continued to exist only on paper, he did not realize to what degree he himself as a result of his inadmissibly uncritical belief in

the German forgeries, helped to undermine the basis for an anti-Hitler coalition and which he had also helped to create. As a result of all his actions during the period from February through May 1937, he had made the most severe error during all his political career. However, this in no way means that there would not have been the Tukhachevskiy affair without his [Benes] involvement. However, its actual, concrete development and shaping cannot be separated from his name.

Appendix 1

**Embassy Counsellor von Teppelskirch to the Counsellor
of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Schiep**

7 January 1938

You have informed me that in talking with the embassy counsellor reporter Braun von Stumm on 27 December 1937, a co-worker from the French embassy in Berlin voiced the notion of Tukhachevskiy's guilt and here pointed out that the Soviets had sent the corresponding materials to Paris.

The French Ambassador Coulondre in June 1937, after the execution of the eight generals, asked Litvinov how to view the accusations against the generals of spying for Germany. Litvinov replied adroitly and evasively that the court should be allowed to assess this case. The details, aside from those published in the court verdict, were unknown to him and it was scarcely worth Coulondre's drawing attention to the fact that the executed generals because of their training in Germany and their sympathies represented a Germanophile group in the Soviet Army leadership and the elimination of which should tell logically for the benefit of Franco-Soviet relations. Litvinov's reply could not persuade Coulondre. On the contrary, all the ambassadors accredited to Moscow are firmly convinced that the spy accusation does not correspond to the truth.

We firmly adhere to the opinion that the accusations against the generals are only a pretext and that a direct or concrete conspiracy never existed. We as before assume that Stalin eliminated the generals because their position seemed suspicious to him and precisely in the area that they could become dangerous due to their influence on the formation of the Army and as centers for the crystallizing of an opposition. It is completely possible that the actions against the generals are a matter of intrigue on the part of a secret service of some state (as in the text!). In and of itself Germany was right to continue to defend its former position and not offer any serious refutations to the Soviet false accusations, since the goal which is of interest to us from the political viewpoint, namely the elimination of the Franco-Soviet allied treaty, could not be achieved by us using such reputations.... On the other hand, a professional and clear

position by the German officials, bearing in mind such events in the Soviet Union which cause revulsion throughout the world, undoubtedly has fallen on favorable grounds.

PA AA in Bonn: Second Political Directorate
Pog. Russia 9, Political Questions on Russia
Volume 5.

Appendix 2

**The German Ambassador Count Welczeck to the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Paris, 17 June 1937

Since last year's visit to Paris, Tukhachevskiy has not been unknown. Gens Yakir and Uborevich led the maneuvers last year which were attended by the French Gens Schweissguth and Vuillemin. The notion that all these highly-placed military leaders were traitors is almost unimaginable in the French public.

In line with the bloody sentence, there has been not a single paper, even POPULAIRE (socialist) and, in addition, the frankly Russophile OEUVRE which determined to find words of justification for the action itself. It is hard to believe the soundness of the sentence due to the monstrosity of the accusation. Those newspapers which in their criticism at first assumed the validity of the accusation have concluded from this that the morale and combat capability of the Red Army, if such crimes are possible in the leadership, could only be reduced. If furthermore, as the Soviet press has stated, Tukhachevskiy was engaged in espionage for Germany, individual newspapers have been concerned by the question: Have military data important for France been turned over to Germany in line with the then existing relations between both general staffs? Espionage for Germany is considered possible as was stated in the article by the military writer Jean Cartiemar published in EXCELSIOR clearly with the approval of the General Staff. From the article it is clear that the French General Staff several weeks ago received information that a number of military messages turned over to the Russians were known in Berlin 14 days later. However, since there have never been any talks between the representatives of the French and Soviet General Staffs, consequently, there can be no question that under these conditions secret information became available to the Red Army.

In JOURNAL an article has appeared by Gen Moraine on his conversation with Tukhachevskiy and whom he called "a major specialist on Russian Arms." In this talk, Tukhachevskiy supposedly stated: "I would request that you not speak about equipment which you have as I know it very well, but I would be particularly grateful if you would inform me on the equipment which is presently being developed and, if possible, about equipment being designed."

The well known staff member of the socialist newspaper REPUBLIQUE, Pierre Dominique, has set two alternatives: either Tukhachevskiy is guilty and then France could become an ally of a Russia which is as ruined as Tsarist Russia. Or: the accusations do not correspond to the truth and then France could become the ally of a new Ivan the Terrible....

The general opinion, even of such a newspaper friendly to the Soviet Union as OEUVRE comes down to the fact that if now it is still impossible to establish in detail the more profound reasons for the actions against Tukhachevskiy and the seven generals, then the very fact of the execution would strike a heavy blow to the international prestige of the Soviet Union and cause just doubts as to the value of the treaty with the Russians....

One of the leading generals of the French General Staff in my presence voiced the opinion that the executions had a very strong impact on shaping French opinion vis-a-vis Soviet Russia.

PA AA in Bonn, Embassy in Paris,
479 v. "Russia," Vol 21—408280—283.

Footnotes

1. Even after the Austrian Anschluss, Benes stated that, in his conviction, "the strike power of the Soviet Union after the purges has been reduced significantly less than was assumed" (message of Gen E.L. Spears to Halifax on his visit to Benes. London, 14 and 21 March 1938. FO 371. Vol 21716, p 324 and FO 800, vol 309, p 133, PRO, London).

2. G. Gauche, "Activities of the Intelligence Bureau in the Period of 1935-1940," Paris, 1955, p 62; Message of the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Gen Bogumil Fiala to the Chief of the Military Intelligence Service, Col Frantisek Moravec. Prague, 1937. Legacy of Gen Fiala, private possession in Prague.

3. Ibid.

4. Eduard Benes, "Memoirs," Prague, 1947, pp 63 et seq.; Zdenec Fierlinger, "In the Service of Czechoslovakia," Prague, Vol 1, 1951, p 71 et seq.; "Review of the History of Czechoslovak-Soviet Relations in 1917-1939," Prague, 1974, p 334.

5. Message of Fierlinger to Krofta from Moscow of 2 February 1938. Moscow, 1938, No 1, in. No 62, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague: 27 1/1 2—Hl. st. 1938/1, Military History Archives in Prague; "Review of the History of Czechoslovak-Soviet Relations in 1917-1937," p 331.

6. Message of Fierlinger to Krofta from Moscow of 2 February 1938, Moscow, 1938, No 8, in. No 62, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, 27 1/1 2—Hl. st. 1938/1, Military History Archives in Prague; "Review of the History of Czechoslovak-Soviet Relations in 1917-1939," p 331.

7. Message of Gen Fiala to Col Moravec, Prague, 9 November 1937.

8. Ibid.

9. Message of Col F. Moravec to Gen B. Fiala (Report on Contacts and Experience of Work of Second Directorate With Soviet Intelligence Service), Prague, 9 December 1937, legacy of Gen Fiala, private possession in Prague.

10. Message of Col Moravec to Gen B. Fiala (Report on Contacts and Experience of Work of Second Directorate With Soviet Intelligence Service), Prague, 9 December 1937, legacy of Gen Fiala, private possession in Prague; "Master of Espionage. Memoirs of Gen Moravec," London, 1975, p 108; Frantisek Moravec: "The Spy They Did Not Believe," Toronto, 1977, p 156. For the talks which led in 1936 to the establishing of the Soviet intelligence group in Czechoslovakia as well as its organizing, activities and membership until the purges, see the book: Moravec, p 97 et seq.; "The Russians in Czechoslovakia." Message Sent by Abwehr Section 1 "East" to Counterintelligence Department in Munich. Berlin, 22 August 1936, RW 49, Vol 30, Fol. 90/92, Military Section of FRG State Archives in Freiburg.

11. "Decision of the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo," Moscow, 10 December 1937; V Political Directorate, Po 5; Domestic Policy, Activities of Legislative and Party Bodies in Russia, Vol 4, PA AA in Bonn; Telegram of Papen to Hitler from Vienna, 23 December 1937, Military Section of the FRG State Archives in Freiburg.

12. Message of Eisenlohr to Ministry of Foreign Affairs From Prague of 3 March 1938. II Political Directorate-47, Pog. Czechoslovakia, Vol 5 PA AA in Bonn; "Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in Moscow," Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, Berlin, 14 March 1938, ADAP, Series D, Vol 2, No 82, pp 129 et seq.

13. "Chamberlain has expressed regret over the uncertainty which the mass trials, sentences and liquidation of people have caused. Eden was instructed to invite Ambassador Mayskiy in order to draw his attention to the painful and harmful impression for ensuring peace as caused by the Russian domestic events overseas." From the message of Osusky to Krofta from Paris of 11 December 1937; Vaclav Kral, "The Munich Agreement of 1938," Prague, 1968, No 6, p 56.

14. Krofta in a circular telegram of 14 December 1937 thus depicted the message from Delbos "London feels that the large-scale purges jeopardize the domestic might of Russia," Vaclav Kral, "Munich Agreement in 1938," No 7, p 61.
15. Message from Halifax to Newton in Prague. London, 2 May 1938, DBFP, 3d Ser. Vol 1/1938, London, 1949, No 181, p 236.
16. Note of Krofta on message from Czechoslovak temporary Charge d'affaires in Washington Kosec on his discussion with Ambassador Bullitt on the liner "Ile de France" in May 1938, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, Krofta holdings.
17. Message of Ripka on his talks in London during the period from 21 through 26 June 1938. Kav. 1938, No 2819, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague. The description of this message in the book by Vaclav Kral, "Munich Agreement of 1938" (p 144 et seq.) falsifies its content, as the author completely omits this evaluation and publishes only the milder statements by Churchill.
18. Message of Coulondre to Delbos from Moscow of 28 June 1937, DBDF, 2d Series, Vol VI, Paris, 1970, No 144, pp 225-228; Message of Embassy Counsellor von Tippelskirch to the Counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Schiep from Moscow of 7 January 1938, II Political Directorate—74, Pog. Russia 9, Political Questions on Russia, Vol 5, PA AA in Bonn.
19. Message of Bullitt to the U.S. State Department from Paris of 1 June 1937. DSDF861, 00/11713, NA Washington.
20. Message of Bullitt to the U.S. State Department from Paris of 17 June 1937. DSDF851, 00/1684, NA Washington.
21. Message from Chilston to British Foreign Office from Moscow of 27 July 1938, FO 371, Vol 21095, Document No 3932, PRO in London.
22. Message of Schulenburg to Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Moscow of 14 December 1937, ADAP, Series D, Baden-Baden, 1950, Vol 1, No 73, p 101.
23. Message of French Military Attache, Lt Col Simon to Paris from Moscow of 14 June, 11 October and 3 November 1937 and Military Attache Col Pallas from Moscow of 18 April 1938, DDF, 2d Series, Paris, Vol 4, 1967, No 73, pp 116 et seq.; *ibid.*, Paris, Vol VII, 1972, No 52, p 100; *ibid.*, No 185, pp 314-319; *ibid.*, Paris, Vol IX, 1974, No 192, pp 390-394; see also DSDF 861.60/305 of 3 June 1938, NA in Washington.
24. Message from Corbain to Delbos from London of 22 June 1937, Paris, Vol VI, 2d Series, 1970, No 123, pp 123-124.
25. Message from Chilston to Halifax from Moscow of 3 September 1938, FO 371, Vol 22287, pp 122-124, PRO in London.
26. A full message on the lamentable state of the Red Army after the Austrian Anschluss is found in the detailed telegram from Coulondre to Bonnet from Moscow of 15 April 1938, DDF, 2d Series, Paris, Vol IX, 1974, No 192, pp 301 et seq.
27. Message of Welczeck to Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Paris of 17 June 1937. The Embassy in Paris, 479 v. Russia, Vol 21, PA AA in Bonn.
28. Message of the German Embassy (Brauer) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Paris of 14 April 1938. II Political Directorate, Pol. 3, France—Russia, Vol 1, PA AA in Bonn.
29. J.B. Duroselle, "The History of Diplomacy From 1919 Until Our Days," Paris, 1966, p 234; Gottfried Niedhart, "Great Britain and the Soviet Union in 1934-1939," Munich, 1972, p 260; Message from Chautemps to Bullitt of 4 December 1937 in Paris, FRUS 1937/1. Washington 1954, p 188.
30. Message from Delbos to Bullitt of 22 November 1937, FRUS 1937/1. Washington, 1954, p 158.
31. Message from Bullitt to U.S. State Department from Paris, 17 June 1937.
32. Paul Reynaud, "At the Center of Events, 1930-1945," Paris, 1951, pp 98, 225.
33. Messages from Welczeck to Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Paris from 19 and 20 May 1937. II Political Directorate, Pol. 3, France—Russia, PA AA in Bonn; Message from Schulenburg to Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Moscow of 24 May 1937.
34. Note of Schulenburg in Moscow, 1 July 1938, ADAP, Series D, Vol 1, No 787, p 925; Decision of the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo, Moscow, 10 December 1937, V Political Directorate, Pol. 5, Domestic Policy, Legislative and Party Activities in Russia, Vol 4, PA AA in Bonn.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Message from Papen to Hitler from Vienna of 23 December 1937.
37. Message of Schulenburg to Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Moscow of 14 December 1937. CESKE SLOVO, 8 December 1937.
38. Coulondre, p 187. Poland was also stunned by the "hostile attitude of Delbos to the Soviet Union" (statement by Shembeck of his conversation with Gen Stachiewicz. In the book by Shembeck, p 261). H.K.G.

Ronnefahrt correctly writes that the Delbos trip was uncereceremonious in terms of Soviet diplomacy. "The Sudeten Crisis in International Policy," Wiesbaden, Vol 1, 1961, p 191.

39. Message from Osusky to Krofta from Paris of 27 January 1938. Kav. 1938, No 385, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague; see also: Jaroslav Jiru, "From Delbos to Bonnet," CsCH, 1967, p 36.

40. Message from Osusky to Krofta from Paris of 4 March 1938. Kav. 1938, No 496, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.

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Prisoner of War, Sr Lt Yakov Dzhugashvili
00010005j Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 88 (signed to press
23 Nov 88) pp 70-79

[Article by Maj A.N. Kolesnik, candidate of historical sciences: "Prisoner of War, Sr Lt Yakov Dzhugashvili"]

[Text] On 7 August 1941, A.A. Zhdanov learned of a document with an unusual content:

"Secret. To the member of the Military Council of the Northwestern Sector, Comrade A.A. Zhdanov

"I send to you three leaflets dropped from an enemy airplane on the line of our front.

"Appendix: three leaflets, to the addressee only.

"Chief of the Political Directorate
of the Northwestern Front
(signature illegible)

"7 August 1941"

What leaflets were these? What had caused a report on them to such a high-ranking leader and even with a security classification?

Let us give their complete text: "Comrades, Red Army-men! It is not true that the Germans torture you or even kill prisoners! That is a base lie! German soldiers are well inclined to prisoners! You are being frightened so that you fear the Germans! Avoid useless bloodshed and come over to the Germans safely!"

Below was a photograph with two German officers and a prisoner, and beneath it an inscription with the following content: "German officers talking with Yakov Dzhugashvili. Son of Stalin, Yakov Dzhugashvili, senior lieutenant, battery commander of the 14th Howitzer Artillery Regiment of the 14th Armored Division surrendered to the Germans. If such a prominent Soviet

officer and fine commander has surrendered, this shows clearly that any resistance to the German Army is completely pointless. For this reason end the war and come over to us!"

On the back side of the leaflet were reproduced several hand-written lines: "Dear Father! I have been captured, I am healthy, and I will soon be sent to one of the officer camps in Germany. Our treatment is good. I wish you good health and greetings to all. Yakov." It was then stated that this letter from Yakov Dzhugashvili to his father Iosif Stalin had been "delivered to him by diplomatic means."

We as yet do not know whether the Nazis used diplomats for such a delicate question for Stalin. However, there can be no doubt that A.A. Zhdanov informed him of what happened. Stalin had particular confidence in this Politburo member, secretary of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and military council member of the Northwestern Sector. Zhdanov had frequently met his son and had received him at his home.

Ya. Dzhugashvili was Stalin's son from his first marriage. It is possible to gain some notion of his personality, albeit incompletely, from documents stored in his personal file, in particular the autobiography, party recommendation and certification.

The autobiography is written in a small hand and there are numerous corrections in it. It was dated 11 November 1939. It points out that he, Yakov Dzhugashvili was born in 1908 in Baku, in the family of a professional revolutionary and that his father, I.V. Stalin, is presently employed in party work and his mother died in 1908. It is then pointed out that his brother Vasily Stalin was studying in an air school, his sister Svetlana was a student in a Moscow secondary school, his wife Yuliya Isaakovna Meltser was born in Odessa in a white-collar family, his wife's brother is a white collar personnel, and his wife's mother is a housewife. Prior to 1935, the wife was supported by her father as she was studying. The autobiography ended as follows: "From 1936 through 1937, I worked at the power plant of the Plant imeni Stalin in the position of duty engineer.... In 1937, I was admitted to the evening division of the Artillery Academy of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army]. In 1938, I became a student of the 4th Course of the First Faculty of the RKKA Artillery Academy."

In an official autobiography, naturally, there is no and cannot be even any hint of the differences between Yakov and his father and which were to become the reason for the son's attempt at suicide. Positions saved Yakov's life. His subsequent admission to the military academy must obviously be viewed as a compromise, as a step toward reconciliation with Stalin who wanted his sons to become military men. Below we publish the documents relating to the time Ya.I. Dzhugashvili was studying in the academy.

From the certification:

"Calm. General development good. During the current academic year he passed only meteorology. He went through firing theory individually and was passed on to theory of plane error theory, including the processing of experimental data. He has fallen greatly behind in the academy and there are fears that he will not be able to make up the latter by the end of the academic year. Due to illness he was not at the winter camp courses and also in the camps has been absent from 24 June until the present.

"He has not undergone practical exercises.

"He is little acquainted with tactical weapons training.

"It is possible that he can be promoted to 5th Course under the condition of passing all his training fails by the end of the next 1939-1940 academic year.

"Chief of Ground Department
"Colonel (Novikov)"

Conclusion of Certification Commission

Due to the late switch to the command faculty and the failure to completely pass the subjects he is to remain for a repeat course.

Due to the passing of the VVP [universal military training] and as having served a year in the academy, he merits awarding the military rank of lieutenant.

Certification

**For Period From 15 August 1939 Through 15 July 1940
for Student of 4th Course of Command Faculty at the
Artillery Academy Lt Yakov Iosifovich Dzhughashvili**

1. Year of birth—1908 2. Nationality—Georgian 3. Party affiliation—member of VKP(b) since 1940* 4. Social status—white collar personnel 5. General and military education—completed Transport Institute imeni Dzerzhinskiy 6. Knowledge of foreign languages—studying English 7. When joined the RKKA—since September 1938 8. How much time spent in command positions—from December 1939 in position held 9. Participation in Civil War—no 10. Decorations—no 11. Service in Whites and bourgeois nationalistic armies and anti-Soviet bands—no

* In party recommendation time of joining VKP(b) dated 1941.—Editors.

Is loyal to party of Lenin-Stalin and socialist motherland. General development good, political satisfactory. Takes part in party-social life. Disciplined but has not sufficiently mastered a knowledge of military regulations

concerning relations with superiors. Sociable, academic success good but in last session had unsatisfactory grade for foreign language. Physically developed but frequently falls ill.

Due to short stay in army, military training requires much additional work.

Group Senior Officer Capt (Ivanov)

Conclusion of Senior Chiefs

Agreed with certification. Attention must be drawn to eliminating shortcomings in organs of hearing which prevent subsequent normal service.

Chief of 4th Course, Maj (Kobrya)

Conclusion of Certification Commission

To be promoted to 5th Course. More attention must be given to mastering tactics and developing precise command language.

Commission Chairman—Chief of 1st Faculty
Maj Gen Art (Sheremetov)

Deputy Chief of Faculty and Chief of 4th Course Maj
(Kobrya)

Party Buro Secretary Capt (Timofeyev)
Group Officer Capt (Ivanov)

**Party (Political) Recommendation for VKP(b) Member,
Student of Course V of Faculty I of Order of Lenin
Artillery Academy imeni F.E. Dzerzhinskiy Yakov
Iosifovich Dzhughashvili**

VKP(b) member since 1941, party card No. 3524864, year of birth 1908, white collar worker. Dedicated to cause of party of Lenin-Stalin. Is working on increasing his ideological and theoretical level. Particularly interested in Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Takes part in party work. Participated on editorial board of wall newspaper and proved to be good organizer.

Is conscientious of his studies. Overcomes difficulties stubbornly and tenaciously. Has authority among comrades.

Does not have any party reprimands.

Party recommendation approved at party buro session 14 April 1941.

Party Buro Secretary of 5th Course (Timofeyev)

Of interest is the text of the certification of Ya.I. Dzhughashvili written on the eve of the Great Patriotic War:

"General and political development good. Disciplined, efficient. Academic record good. Takes active part in political and social work of course. Has complete higher education (heating engineer). Volunteered for military

service. Loves drilling and studies it. Approaches the solving of questions thoughtfully, is neat and accurate in work. Physically developed. Tactical and artillery weapons training good. Sociable. Has authority. Is able to apply knowledge obtained in course of academic exercises. Report tactical exercise on rifle division level conducted with grade of "good." Marxist-Leninist training good.

Devoted to party of Lenin-Stalin and to socialist motherland. By nature a calm, tactful, exacting and strong-willed commander. During a troop tour of duty in position of battery commander showed himself completely prepared. Handled work well. After brief tour of duty in position of battery commander is to be promoted to position of battalion commander. Merits awarding of next military rank of captain.

Has passed state exams in following subjects:

1. Tactics—good 2. Firing—good 3. Principles of Marxism-Leninism—average 4. Principles of artillery weapon design—good 5. English—good

Conclusion of Certification Commission

Merits diploma. Can be employed in position of battery commander.

Academy Chief, Lt Gen Art (Sivkov)
Commission Chairman, Maj Gen Art (Sheremetov)
Commission Members: Brig Commissar (Krasilnikov)
Reg Commissar (Prochko)

It must be pointed out that the grades and the certifications were completely objective and the high position of the student's father had no influence on the objectivity of the instructors.

In May 1941, Ya. Dzhugashvili became a commander of an artillery battery. On 27 June 1941, the battery of the 14th Howitzer Artillery Regiment entered combat. On 4 July it was surrounded. The place and date of the capturing of Sr Lt Ya. Dzhugashvili were learned from a German leaflet delivered to the political section of the 6th Army of the Southern Front. On it was the comment: "Scattered in Nikopol Oblast. 13 August 41. Chief of political section of 6th Army, Brig Commissar Gerasimenko."

On the leaflet was a photograph and below the following text:

"This is Yakov Dzhugashvili, elder son of Stalin, battery commander from the 14th Howitzer Artillery Regiment of the 14th Armored Brigade which on 16 July was captured near Vitebsk along with thousands of other commanders and soldiers.

"Under Stalin's orders, Timoshenko and our political commissars teach us that Bolsheviks are not taken prisoner. However, Red Armymen are constantly coming over to us. In order to frighten you, the commissars lie to you that the Germans treat prisoners poorly.

"Stalin's son himself by his example has shown that this is a lie. He surrendered because any resistance to the German Army is now useless? Follow the example of Stalin's son as he is alive and healthy and feels fine. Why must you suffer useless sacrifices and go to a certain death when even the son of your Supreme Ruler has already been taken prisoner.

"You come over too!"

The Nazi ideologists figured that, reading this raging falsehood, the Soviet soldiers would begin to surrender in masses. For this purpose on the leaflet they printed a pass for commanders and soldiers of our army who were defecting to the side of the German troops and designed for an unlimited number of persons. It stated: "The holder of this, not wanting senseless bloodshed for the interests of the kikes and commissars is leaving the conquered Red Army and is defecting to the side of the German Armed Forces. The German soldiers and officers will provide a good reception for the defector, they will feed him and provide a job."

Someone gave Yakov Dzhugashvili away in a camp near Berezina during a round of prisoners by an officer from the SS service.

One of the interrogations was conducted at the command post of the Commander of Army Group Center, Gen Field Mar von Bock, on 18 July 1941. It was conducted by Maj Walter Holters, a professional intelligence agent and who in postwar times served in the American special services, by four Abwehr workers, a staff officers, translators as well as a liaison officer for the Supreme Wehrmacht Command with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Schattendorf, who then prepared a report on the results of the interrogation for the Minister of Foreign Affairs von Ribbentrop.

The interrogation was tape recorded and transcribed. The text of the stenogram appears as follows:

"Did you surrender voluntarily or were you taken by force?"

"I was taken by force."

"How?"

"On 12 July, our unit was surrounded. The heaviest bombing began. I resolved to make my way to our side but then I was stunned. I would have shot myself had I been able."

"Do you consider being a prisoner a shame?"

"Yes, I do."

"Do you still feel that Soviet troops have a chance to achieve a turn in the war?"

"Yes, I do. The war is still far from over."

"And what would happen if we would quickly take Moscow?"

"I cannot imagine that."

"Well, we are already not far from Moscow."

"You will never take Moscow."

"Why do commissars exist in the Red Army?"

"To provide fighting spirit and political leadership!"

"Do you feel that the new power in Russia conforms more to the interests of the workers and peasants than in Tsarist times?"

"Without any doubt."

"When did you last speak with your father?"

"On 22 June by telephone. Learning that I was leaving for the front, he said: 'Go and fight!'"

The replies by Yakov Dzhugashvili to the enemies show his high moral qualities and exceptional dedication to the motherland.

The next interrogation of Stalin's son was conducted at the headquarters of Gen Field Mar von Kluge by the professional intelligence agent, Capt Strickfeld, who subsequently recalled this as an unsuccessful attempt to recruit Yakov. "A good, intelligent face with strong Russian features," he wrote. "He behaved with restraint and correctly. He had spoken with his father the last time before leaving for the front by phone. He categorically rejected a compromise between capitalism and communism. He did not believe in the final victory of the Germans." Ya. Dzhugashvili was offered to write a letter to his family, to speak over the radio, or agree to put out leaflets with an appeal on his behalf to Soviet soldiers. All of this he categorically rejected.

Nevertheless, the Gobbels disinformation machine was working at full pace. Different variations of "shouting" leaflets were fabricated and used, including such as: "Follow the example of Stalin's son! He surrendered. He is alive and feels fine. Why do you want to go to your death, when even the son of your leader has been taken prisoner? Peace to the tortured motherland! Bayonets in the ground!"

Leaflets with Dzhugashvili's photographs continued to be printed. A third appeared in addition to the two previously printed ones. Here there was not a single photograph where Yakov looked at the camera. They were all made by a hidden camera.

In the autumn of 1941, another attempt was made to extract political capital, using the unusual prisoner of war in a fancy, dirty game. Ya. Dzhugashvili was moved to Berlin and made directly available to the services of Gobbels, although supervision continued to be carried out by the Gestapo. He was billeted in the fashionable Adlon Hotel, surrounded by Georgian counterrevolutionaries from the hangers-on of the old regime. Clearly a carefully worked-out plan was put into motion the aim of which was to win the prisoner over to their side, having provided him with particular comfort after the camp and constantly showing films on the setbacks of the Red Army.

It was precisely then that the photograph was taken of Yakov Dzhugashvili with Georgiy Skryabin¹, supposedly Molotov's son. The prisoners were photographed against a background of an autumn landscape and both wore forage caps, greatcoats, without belts, and hands in pockets. Skryabin was looking off to the side and Dzhugashvili down to the ground. They wear a serious, concentrated expression. The photograph is dated 25 November 1941. It was accompanied by the following text:

"Look at them! These are your yesterday's comrades who, having seen that further resistance was useless, were taken prisoner. They are the sons of Stalin and Molotov! They are in German captivity and both are alive, healthy, well fed and clothed. Soldiers and commanders! Follow the example of the sons of Stalin and Molotov! And you will see for yourselves that there is a new life. It is better than the one which your 'leaders' have forced you to lead."

Why did the Nazis put Dzhugashvili and the pseudo-Skryabin together? We feel that it seemed to them that in this way it would be easier to win the captured Soviet soldiers over to the side of the Reich.

At the beginning of 1942, Dzhugashvili was moved to an officer camp Oflag XIII-B located in Hammelburg. There the Nazis tried to break him by physical humiliation and hunger. However, nothing came of this either.

In April 1942, Yakov was shifted to Oflag XC in Lubeck where they kept particularly dangerous officers for the Third Reich from different countries. The neighbor of Stalin's son was Capt Rene Blum, the son of the French Prime Minister Leon Blum.

After the escape from the camp by the French Gen Giraud, by a special order personal responsibility for the Soviet prisoner was placed on the camp commandant,

Col von Vachmester. Ya. Dzhugashvili was not permitted to receive food parcels and letters which was permitted to the imprisoned Poles, French and English who even received their pay. Upon a decision of a meeting of Polish officers, Yakov each month began to be given packages with food.

At the same time, they continued distributing entire booklets with photographs of Ya. Dzhugashvili. In one of them which included 54 photographs, 2 were accompanied by commentaries of the sort: "Even Stalin's son, Sr Lt Dzhugashvili, has given up this absurd resistance"; "Commanders and soldiers of the Red Army! Look at these pictures from the German prisoner of war camps! This is the reality in German captivity! Photographs do not lie! But your commissars are lying! Cease the absurd resistance! Come over to us! These comrades of yours have stopped the absurd war against the powerful, invincible German Army...."

There is reason to assume that at this time a new period began in the more intense treatment of Dzhugashvili. As the main means of pressuring Yakov they began to use leaflets and newspapers which printed "statements by Stalin's son" which had been fabricated by the Nazis. However, the enemy did not succeed in breaking his will. This can be seen by the evidence of the former Polish Lt Marian Wienclawicz: "On 4 May 1942, three guards armed with submachine guns headed by a captain escorted into our barrack a prisoner wearing a Soviet uniform. This carefully guarded prisoner was Sr Lt Dzhugashvili. We immediately recognized him: without head gear, dark haired, precisely as he was in the photograph printed in the Nazi newspaper.... Several times I happened to meet Yakov face to face. He said that he had never made any statements for the Germans and he asked if he did not succeed in ever seeing his motherland again that we inform his father that he had remained loyal to military duty. All that had been concocted by Nazi propaganda was a lie."

There is also evidence by a different Pole, the former prisoner of war, Capt Aleksandr Salacky. In his book "Prisoner of War No. 335" published in Warsaw in 1973, he wrote: "During his stay in Lubeck, Dzhugashvili came closer and befriended the Poles. Among his close friends were Lt Kordani who spoke Russian fluently, Lt Wienclawicz and Lt Myslowsky. We discussed various subjects and played cards and chess.... In describing his tragic experiences, he emphasized that he would never betray the motherland and that the statements by the German press were an outright lie. He believed in the victory of the Soviet Union."

Soon thereafter together with a group of Polish officers, Dzhugashvili made an attempt to escape. And again he was unsuccessful. This time he was moved to the death camp at Sachsenhausen and placed in a division where there were prisoners who were relatives of highly-placed leaders from the Allied countries of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The living conditions in this camp were the harshest in comparison with other camps. In its walls some 100,000 Soviet citizens perished. Having placed Ya. Dzhugashvili there, the Nazis were hoping clearly to put pressure on the Soviet Supreme Commander-in-Chief, in hoping that he would turn to the German leadership with a request to return his captive son.

The Battle of Stalingrad ended lamentably for the German Army. Did Hitler know that Dzhugashvili had been taken prisoner? Undoubtedly. Events developed in such a manner that Stalin's son came to hold a special place in his plans for settling scores with those on whom he wished to place responsibility for the defeat. Thus arose the idea of exchanging Field Mar von Paulus, a participant in World Wars I and II, one of the main authors of the Barbarossa Plan and commander of the 6th Army for Yakov Dzhugashvili.

However, Stalin decisively rejected the proposal for an exchange. His official reply transmitted through the chairman of the Swedish Red Cross, Count Bernadotte, consisted in one phrase: "I will not exchange a soldier for a marshal."

Such a harsh decision was a sentence not only for the prisoner, Sr Lt Dzhugashvili, but also for many Soviet soldiers in the Nazi prisons.

The Nazis endeavored to involve Yakov in the ROA (the Vlasov Army) where they worked intensely to attract Soviet prisoners of war. The Nazis had a vital need for an effective political trick, that is, to make the son of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces one of the leaders of the ROA. In support of this idea is the fact that Dzhugashvili passed through the prisoner of war camps where the basic contingent of the Vlasov Army was checked out. To his honor, he found the strength to reject all the proposals of the Nazis.

In an official document stored in the archives at the memorial of the Sachsenhausen Camp and compiled by its former prisoners, it is noted: "Yakov Dzhugashvili constantly felt the hopelessness of his position. He frequently fell into a depression, he refused to eat and he was particularly effected by the statement by Stalin which was repeatedly broadcast over the camp radio that 'there were no prisoners of war, there are traitors of the motherland.' Possibly this pushed him into a rash act. During the evening of 14 April 1943, Yakov refused to enter his barrack and dashed toward the death zone. A sentry fired. Death came instantaneously. Then they threw the corpse against the high-voltage wire fence. 'Attempt to escape,' reported the camp leadership.... The remains of Yakov Dzhugashvili were burned in the camp crematorium...."

Does the quoted document provide an answer to all questions? Why did Ya. Dzhugashvili refuse to go into the barrack? Why did he prefer death from a sentry's bullet? Who, aside from him, was in the barrack at that moment?

Here is what SS Officer Konrad Harfich, who was on duty on 14 April near the camp fence, recalled about the last minutes of Yakov's life: "Dzhugashvili crawled across the wire and was in the neutral zone. Then he placed one foot on the strip of barbed wire and simultaneously with his left hand grabbed the insulator. Letting it go, he grabbed the electric wire. For an instant he stood immobile with his right foot back, chest forward and then shouted: 'Sentry! Are you a soldier, don't be a coward, shoot me!'"

Harfich fired his pistol. The bullet entered the prisoner's head, entering 4 cm from the right ear. Death was instantaneous.

Replies to many questions can also be found in the memoirs of the already-mentioned Aleksandr Salacky and found in the first issue of MILITARY HISTORY REVIEW for 1981 and which is published in Warsaw. In particular, these describe the last days in the life of Stalin's son and his death.

"In the barrack," wrote Salacky, "in addition to Yakov and Vasilii Kokorin who pretended to be the son of Molotov's sister but in fact her neighbor, there were four other English officers: William Murphy, Andrew Walsh, Patrick O'Brien and Thomas Cushing. Relations between the Russians and the English were tense.

"In the eyes of the Russians the holding of the English 'at attention' in front of the Germans was insulting and a sign of cowardice and several times the English had been let know of this.

"For the English, the refusal of the Russians to salute the German officers and the sabotaging of orders...brought many problems. The English frequently belittled the Russians for their national shortcomings. All of this and, possibly, personal hostility led to quarrels. The atmosphere grew heated. On Wednesday, 14 April 1943, after dinner there was a stormy argument which developed into a fight. Cushing rushed at Yakov accusing him of slovenliness and all the remaining prisoners joined in the conflict. O'Brien...confronted Kokorin and called him a 'Bolshevik pig.' And Cushing also challenged Yakov and hit him in the face with his fist. Yakov could not tolerate this. For him, this was the culmination point of his stay in captivity.

"You can understand this. On the one hand, the son of Stalin himself who constantly resisted regardless of the punishments and, on the other, a prisoner, a hostage whose name had become a powerful element in disinformation. What could be waiting for him even after release?

"In the evening he refused to go into the barrack and demanded to see the commandant and after a refusal to meet with him with shouts of 'Shoot me! Shoot me!'

suddenly rushed toward the barbed wire fence and threw himself on it. The alarm went off and all the searchlights on the guard towers came alive...."

The Nazis concealed the death of Yakov Dzhugashvili. Even dead, he gave them an opportunity to continue intrigues and carry out disinformation by using his photographs. Moreover, from all appearances, they were afraid that captive Germans in the USSR would be shown harsh retaliatory measures of punishment and they expected retribution for the tragic death of Stalin's son.

After the surrender of Nazi Germany, many documents related to the stay in captivity of Ya. Dzhugashvili fell into the hands of the Anglo-American group which studied the German archives. They were concealed from the public for many years. For what purpose?

To a certain degree an answer to this question is provided by a letter from an official of the British Foreign Office, Michael Weinen of 27 July 1945 to a colleague in the United States and published in the Swedish newspaper AFTENBLADET on 16 March 1980. This states: "Our opinion...is that we must abandon the intention to inform Mar Stalin of this. Undoubtedly it would be a bad thing to draw attention to the fact that the death of his son was caused by an Anglo-Russian quarrel." The Americans agreed with such a posing of the question. And for several decades this concealed from mankind the fate of one of the many Soviet prisoners of war who perished far from the motherland.

The lesson of immorality provided by those who were responsible for the fate of not only Dzhugashvili but thousands of other prisoners today forces us to reflect about a great deal.

From the Editors. As we have already announced, in September the editors were visited by a delegation consisting of Prof John Ericson, director of the Defense Research Center at Edinburgh University and the U.S. Air Force Col Fred Bolay, senior science associate at the Center for Strategic Research at the National Defense University in Washington. During a talk, Prof D. Ericson promised to send us additional documents on the case of Ya. Dzhugashvili. He carried out his promise. Not long ago we received a parcel from London. The materials from the English archives which we received from the professor will be published in coming issues of the journal.

Footnote

1. V.M. Molotov did not have any sons. This was confirmed by his daughter, Svetlana.

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The Age in Autobiographies

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[Autobiographies of D.M. Karbyshev and I.I. Vatsetis:
"The Age in Autobiographies"]

[Text] [Editorial Introduction] The editors have received numerous letters requesting the story of commanders, commissars and military leaders of the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars. They mention names widely known in the people. In realizing that the reader expects from the journal some new documents, evidence and archival materials supplementing what had been written previously about these legendary persons, we have turned for help to the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense. Its co-workers have carried out enormous research work: they have looked through an enormous number of the personal files of the officers, generals and marshals and have discovered in them the most vividly written and detailed autobiographies of particularly interesting persons.

In carrying out the requests of the reader and in knowing that no one can better describe a person than he himself, as of this issue we are introducing a new heading "The Age in Autobiographies," hoping that it will become a permanent one for us and will have as long life. In this issue of the journal we are publishing the first two autobiographies which were handwritten by Ioakim Ioakimovich Vatsetis and Dmitriy Mikhaylovich Karbyshev.

The publication was prepared by Col (Ret) A.I. Gladun, Lt Col B.Ye. Pestov, Ye.K. Bikusova and T.S. Surova.
[End of Introduction]

Div Cmdr Dmitriy Mikhaylovich Karbyshev

Dmitriy Mikhaylovich Karbyshev (1880-1945), Lt Gen Engr Trps (1940), Professor (1938), Doctor of Military Sciences (1941) and Hero of the Soviet Union (1946 posthumously). CPSU member since 1940. He completed the Nikolayev Military Engineer Academy in 1911. He joined the Soviet Army in 1918 and participated in the Civil War. From 1936, he was on the faculty of the General Staff Academy. In August 1941, being severely wounded and with a concussion, he was taken prisoner. He carried out anti-Nazi work in the concentration camps. In 1945, he was terribly tortured by the Nazis in Mauthausen Camp. He was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously), the Red Banner and Red Star.

I was born on 27 October 1880 in Omsk, Omsk Oblast (the former Akmolinsk Oblast). My father, Mikhail Ilich Karbyshev was a military official and served as a clerk in

the district quartermasters office, of Cossack background, and died in 1892. My mother, Aleksandra Yefimovna Karbysheva (maiden name Luzgina) was from a poor family, barely literate and was a housewife. She died in 1904.

Neither myself nor my wife have any relatives living abroad and neither my wife nor I has ever had any contact with the overseas [emigres]. I am married and have three children. The elder daughter Yelena is a member of the Komsomol and upon orders of the USSR people's commissar of defense, as an exception, was accepted on the naval division of the Command Faculty at the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Military Engineer Academy imeni V.V. Kuybyshev and is on active military service in the RKKA. She was elected a member of the Buro of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Naval Department at the Academy.

My daughter Tatyana (12 years) and son Aleksey (9 years) are studying in secondary school and are members of the Pioneers.

My wife Lidiya Vasilyevna Karbysheva (maiden name Opatskaya) was born in 1892 in Moscow. Prior to the October Revolution, she worked as an accountant in Minsk, in the insurance section of the zemstvo [local governing body]. During the imperialist war she was on the front as a sister of mercy in the 6th Worker Militia of the All-Russian Zemstvo and City Union in the 8th Army. After the October Revolution, she was and has remained a housewife and lives with me. My wife's father, Vasily Vendiktovich Opatskiy is a railroad employee and master of the Domanovo Station of the Belorussian Railroad; in 1914, he was discharged from service and lived in Minsk. During the war in 1915, he was evacuated to the city of Kirsanov (former Tamov Province) where he died in 1920. My wife's mother Anna Maksimovna Opatskaya (maiden name Vasilyeva) is a petty bourgeois, and before the October Revolution was a housewife. After the death of her husband she has been supported by her children living in Moscow (at the address:) Leningrad Highway No. 20, Apt. 54.

My wife's brother Vladimir Vasilyevich Opatskiy prior to the imperialist war worked as a civil engineer in building a grain elevator at Dovlikanovo Station in the former Ufa Province; during the imperialist war and until the October Revolution he was the superintendent of defensive work in the 11th Army. After the October Revolution in 1918, he served as an engineer for assignments and chief of the technical section of the Ukrainian (Kiev) Railroad Administration. In 1919 and 1920, he was the assistant work superintendent for road construction and the chief of the head repair train on the southwestern railroads. In 1920-1922, he served as the chief of the repair train on the southwestern railroads. From 1922 through 1926, he was an assistant chief of the new work section for the track service of the southeastern railroads (Voronezh). From 1926 through 1931, he

was work superintendent of the track service of the Northern Caucasus Railroad (Rostov-na-Donu). In 1932, senior engineer of Glavsheldorstroy [Main Administration for Railroad Construction] (Moscow). From 1933 until the present, he has been a senior science associate at the All-Union Scientific Research Institute for Hydraulic Engineering and Land Reclamation. He lives in Moscow [at the address:] Nizhnaya Doroga [Low Road], No. 191, Apt. 7.

My wife's second brother, Nikolay Vasilyevich Opatskiy, prior to the imperialist war worked as a civil engineer in building a grain elevator at Tamala Station in the former Saratov Province. During the war he served in the 4th Army as a lieutenant in a railroad battalion. After the October Revolution, he was demobilized and worked in Moscow on the Railroad Administration. In the summer of 1918, he was inducted into the RKKA and served as the commander of the 31st Railroad Battalion. He was subsequently a commander of the 9th Railroad Regiment and the chief of the Railroad Troops of the Turkestan Front. In 1924, he was appointed a member of the Military-Technical Committee for the VTU [military-technical administration], and was then shifted as an instructor to the RKKA Military Transport Academy. Presently he is a military engineer 1st rank, chief of the railroad chair of the VTA [Military Transport Academy]. He lives in Leningrad in the VTA dormitory.

My wife's third brother, Lev Vasilyevich Opatskiy, prior to the October Revolution was studying in a secondary school in Kirsanov (former Tambov Province). In 1920, he completed his schooling and under a trade union mobilization was inducted into Red commander courses. He was on the Wrangel Front and at the Moscow Heavy Artillery Courses. In April 1921, he was demobilized and entered the Kiev National Economy Institute. He worked on the newspaper PROLETARSKAYA PRAVDA. In 1925, he completed the institute and from 1926 through 1930, worked as an engineer-economist in Kiev heading the planning section of the Central Worker Cooperative. From 1930 until the present he has been working in Moscow in scientific research and pedagogical service. At the given time he is a senior science associate at the Scientific Research Institute for the Economics of Moscow Oblast. He lives in Moscow on the Leningrad Highway, No. 20, Apt. 54.

My wife's sister, Yevgeniya Vasilyevna Shukhtina (maiden name Opatskaya), prior to the imperialist war worked in Moscow on the railroad as a clerk in the office of the track service chief. Prior to the October Revolution she lived with her husband in Moscow. During the Civil War, she lived with her husband in the head repair train in the Voronezh—Kiev region. She presently lives with her husband in Voronezh and works as a secondary school administrator. Address: Voronezh, Revolution Prospect, 83, Apt. 12.

My wife's sister, Lyudmila Vasilyevna Opatskaya, prior to the October Revolution studied in the secondary school in Kirsanov (former Tambov Province), and

completed it in 1918. Up to 1921, she worked in Kirsanov in social security. From 1921 through 1925, she studied in Kiev at the National Economy Institute. She completed it in 1925. From 1925 to the present she has been working in Moscow as a senior consultant at the State Bank. She lives in Moscow (at the address:) Leningrad Highway, No. 20, Apt. 54.

My wife's sister, Nadezhda Vasilyevna Rosha (maiden name Opatskaya), in 1920 completed secondary school in Kirsanov and married a commander of the RKKA Air Force, Comrade Rosha, member of the VKP(b). The husband died in 1934. Presently N.V. Rosha is working in Moscow as a bookkeeper of construction office at the newspaper IZVESTIYA. She lives in Moscow at the address: Leningrad Highway, No. 20, Apt. 54.

My elder brother, Vladimir Mikhaylovich Karbyshev, studied at Kazan University. In 1887, he was expelled from the university for revolutionary work and participation in revolutionary student actions, he was arrested, exiled to Siberia and imprisoned in Omsk. Upon serving his sentence, he worked in the excise office in Omsk. Later he moved to one of the nearby cities where soon thereafter he died. My second brother, Mikhail Mikhaylovich Karbyshev, a peasant, did not obtain an education and did his military service as a clerk on the staff of the Omsk Military District. Upon demobilization he moved to Pavlodar (Omsk Oblast), where he was employed in agriculture. I lost touch with him in 1895.

My brother Sergey Mikhaylovich Karbyshev also did not obtain an education and lived with our mother. I lost contact with him in 1898. I do not know his address. He lived in Simferopol. The address of my female cousin (Zinaida Alekseyevna Filatova) who lives in Simferopol is Karl Liebknecht Street, No. 2, Apt. 2. According to information available to me, my brother served as a guard at a tobacco factory. My sister Sofya Mikhaylovna (by marriage Ryazantseva), upon completing Omsk Gymnasium [secondary school] was a rural teacher and then married a retired Cossack officer Ryazantsev. I lost contact with her in 1895 and I have information that she died long before the October Revolution.

My second sister, Yevgeniya Mikhaylovna, by marriage Filatova, upon completing Omsk Gymnasium studied in Moscow on the Bestuzhev Pedagogical Courses. She then married a political exile Filatov and lived with her husband in Simferopol. The husband worked as a salesman in the Molotkov—Tokmakov tea store. My sister was a housewife. My sister's husband died before the imperialist war. He left her a house with four or five rooms. My sister rented out rooms and prepared meals. I cannot accurately give her place of employment as since 1895 I have not been in contact with her. My sister died this year. I studied in the city of Omsk in the cadet corps. Because of the arrest of my brother Vladimir, the

family was under police suspicion and I was not admitted to the corps for training at state expense and as an exception I was able to study at my own expense, although my mother was widowed and did not have support.

In 1898, upon completing the corps, I left for St. Petersburg for a military engineer school which I completed in 1900. I was commissioned as an officer of the engineer troops to the Eastern Siberian Combat Engineer Battalion which was located in China. I reached the battalion at the end of October 1900. Soon thereafter the battalion was moved into Manchuria and from here to the Slavyanka area in the Maritime Province (near Vladivostok). Before the Russo-Japanese War, I was on leave and spent 20 days in Japan, in Nagasaki. I was resting and did no work. In January 1904, the battalion was mobilized and I left with it for Manchuria for the Russo-Japanese War. During the war I was constantly part of the 1st Eastern Siberian Combat Engineer Battalion as chief of the cable division of the telegraph company. Upon the end of the war the battalion was moved from Manchuria to Nikolsk-Ussuriyskiy (Maritime Province), where I was in command of a combat engineer company. In 1906, I left military service for the reserves. The reason was my reticence to serve in the Tsarist Army. The grounds was a charge brought against me of agitation among the soldiers and for this I was brought before the "officer society" court.

I was around a year in the reserves, I lived in Vladivostok and was a draftsman. My attempts to find civilian employment did not succeed. At the same time, I received books ordered previously for preparation to enter the Military Engineer Academy. I decided to return to military service and, having completed the academy, to move from the troops into construction work. In 1907, I returned to military service and served in Vladivostok in the newly organized fortress combat engineer battalion where I was in command of a company. In the spring of 1908, I left the battalion, I took the exams in the district and left for St. Petersburg where I continued to prepare for the exams for the engineer academy. I entered the academy and completed it in first place and was given an award for the best diploma project. Upon completing the engineer academy in 1911, I was appointed work superintendent at the Brest Litovsk Fortress where in the rank of captain—military engineer I was engaged in construction work until the imperialist war. In 1914, upon completing the mobilization of the fortress, I was sent to the front to the Peremyshl Fortress; from here I was sent to the Carpathians where I worked as a divisional engineer in the 72d Infantry Division.

In the spring of 1915, I was sent back to Peremyshl, where I conducted siege work. During a sortie of the Austrians from the fortress on 19 March 1915, I participated in the fighting, I was wounded and was sent for treatment to the hospital in Mostsisko (Galicia). For combat distinction at Peremyshl in the summer of 1916 I was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and with

which I ended the war. During the February Revolution I was work superintendent of the 8th Army in the Carpathians, close to Kompolung (on the border with Romania). In the summer of 1917, I was transferred with the 8th Army to Stanislav (Galicia); because of the breaching of the Russian Front at Tarnopol, I retreated with the units to the area of Khotin-Niveselitsy (on the border of Galicia and Romania), where I worked reinforcing positions until the October Revolution. I lived in the village of Malineshti. By the autumn of 1917, before the October Revolution, the 8th Army was bolshevized and by the time of the October Revolution the army was headed by a Military-Revolutionary Committee. Red Guard units were being organized in the army area.

At the end of December 1917, I was summoned by the Military-Revolutionary Committee of the 8th Army to Mogilev-Podolskiy, where the army staff was located, for reinforcing the positions around the city in line with the expected offensive by units of Gen Shcherbachev, the commander of the adjacent army in Romania, and units of the Romanian Army. I arrived in Mogilev Podolskiy during the first days of January 1918 and worked to reinforce the positions and the defenses of the bridges across the Dniester River. I carried out the work upon the assignment of the then chief of staff of the 8th Revolutionary Army, Comrade I.V. Malakhovskiy who presently resides in Moscow, in Petrovsko-Razumovskiy: Timiryazevskiy Lane, No. 6, Apt. 13, the Agricultural Academy. Here the directorate of the chief of engineers proposed by candidacy for the spot of chief of engineers of the 8th Revolutionary Army. At the same time I was appointed by the Military-Revolutionary Committee of the 8th Army as a detachment engineer of one of the Red Guard regiments fighting in the area of Mogilev-Podolskiy and this can be confirmed by Comrade Malakhovskiy. In March 1918, due to the failure of the Brest talks, an offensive was started by the German troops; the army staff was sent from Mogilev-Podolskiy to Uman, where the "Gaydamaks" [Ukrainian counter-revolutionaries] did not allow it to pass. After talks the directorate of the chief of engineers was permitted into Voronezh for deactivation. In mid-April 1918, I was summoned from the directorate of chief of engineers of the 8th Revolutionary Army to Moscow to the College for National Defense Under the Main Military Engineer Directorate [GVIU].

Thus, my military service was not interrupted: from the October Revolution, I served in the 8th Revolutionary Army, taking an active part in its combat. In May 1918, I was sent on a tour of duty from the GVIU to Tula for inspecting engineer work in the border screen detachments on the Ukrainian frontier and which was held by German interventionists. In July 1918, I was appointed section chief of the newly organized Engineer Directorate of the Northern Caucasus Military District. The headquarters was sent to Kizlyar (Northern Caucasus), but because of the civil war which had started in the Caucasus it was held up along the road in Tsaritsyn. In Tsaritsyn the headquarters was made responsible for

strengthening positions around the city in line with the expected offensive by the Whites. Later the engineer directorate was shifted to Simbirsk (now Iyanovsk) and reconstituted as the 1st Military Field Construction. The construction [unit] was entrusted with building positions for the newly organized Simbirsk Fortified Area. I was the deputy chief of construction, I conducted a reconnaissance, drew up a work plan and organized this. Soon thereafter the command of the Eastern Front put me in charge of operational reconnaissance of the Volga River in the aim of its defense from Tetyusha (Kazan Province) to Samara and this I successfully carried out. Upon completing the reconnaissance I was assigned to Samara (now Kuybyshev) as the chief of engineers of the Samara Fortified Area and Comrade V.V. Kuybyshev was the commandant here. At the same time I was appointed the chief of the 6th Military Field Construction. During the winter of 1918-1919, I strengthened the positions of the fortified areas on the approach to the stations of Kinel, Samara and Syzran. In December 1918, I participated in suppressing the kulak revolt in the area of Syzran and fought against the rebels.

With the going over of the army group of Comrade M.V. Frunze to the offensive I was put in charge of supporting the actions of the armored assault group aimed against the enemy flank. Then in the spring of 1919, I was appointed chief leader of all defensive works of the Eastern Front and this was under the command of Comrade Frunze. As the armies of the Eastern Front advanced to the east, under my leadership the positions were strengthened in the Urals, in Chelyabinsk, Orenburg, Kurgan, Uralsk and so forth.

In February 1920, by an order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the 5th Red Banner Army, I was appointed chief of the engineers of the 5th Army. With the 30th and 35th Rifle Divisions, I reinforced the Transbaykal bridgehead opposite the troops of the Japanese interventionists and White Guard units of Gen Semenov and for this the RVS [Revolutionary Military Council] of the 5th Army presented me with a gold watch with the inscription: "To a Red fighter of the socialist revolution from the VTsIK [All-Russian Central Executive Committee]." In August 1919, by a telegram from the commander of the Southern Front, Comrade M.V. Frunze, with whom I had worked in Samara and Simbirsk, I was personally summoned to the post of chief of engineers of the Southern Front. In October 1920, I arrived in Kharkov at the front's staff. At this time the position of chief of engineers was changed and M.V. Frunze appointed me deputy chief of engineers. I was awarded a gold watch by the RVS of the Southern Front for supporting troop operations in the fighting at Perekop and Chongar and for the defeat of Wrangel.

Upon the end of the Civil War the directorate of the chief of engineers of the front was reorganized as the directorate of the chief of engineers of the Armed Forces of the Ukraine and the Crimea. I was the deputy chief of engineers and then the chief of engineers of the Ukraine

and the Crimea. In March 1923, I was called to Moscow and was appointed the chairman of the Engineer Committee of the GVIU. With the reorganization of the GVIU, I was appointed the chairman of the Military-Technical Committee of the Military-Technical Directorate and at the same time was the assistant inspector of the RKKA engineers. Simultaneously, I was appointed the leader of all the RKKA military academies for military engineering and a regular instructor at the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze and the RKKA Air Force Academy. At the same time, I taught military engineering at military academy and military political courses for the advanced training of command personnel.

In 1926, I was shifted to the post of Chief Leader of the RKKA Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze for military engineering. In 1924, upon the submission of the RKKA Military-Technical Academy I received the academic rank of docent. On the 15th anniversary of the RKKA Military Academy in 1934, for outstanding training-pedagogical work I was awarded a diploma of the USSR TsIK [Central Executive Committee] and simultaneously was presented with a commendation and a valuable present (gold watch) by the USSR RVS. In 1935, I received the rank of divisional engineer. In 1936, I was moved to the RKKA General Staff Academy to the position of deputy chief of the tactics chair for higher combined units for the engineer troops. In the current year, in line with the 20th anniversary of the RKKA, I was awarded the Red Star, the jubilee Medal 20 Years of the RKKA and the rank of division commander. In addition, I received commendation in an academy order and a monetary award. Upon my petition, by authorization of the USSR people's commissar of defense, my daughter Ye. Karbysheva as an exception was admitted to the naval division of the Command Faculty at the RKKA Military Engineer Academy imeni V.V. Kuybyshev.

By the general meeting of the student body, instructors and permanent personnel of the General Staff Academy, in the spring of the current year I was elected a member of the electoral commission for elections to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. In 1937, by an order of the USSR people's commissar of defense I was appointed chairman of the State Commission for the Defense of Diploma Projects at the RKKA Military Engineer Academy.

By an order of the chairman of the [All-Union] committee for higher school affairs under the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars], I was appointed a member of the expert operational-tactical commission under the committee.

By the Decree of the Senior Certification Commission of the All-Union Committee for Higher School Affairs of 23 October No. 33/84, I was awarded the academic title of professor on the chair for the tactics of higher combined units. During my service in the RKKA, I have made proposals incorporated in weapons and adopted in

the RKKA. For invention work I was awarded a monetary prize of 1,000 rubles by the RKKA chief of engineers. During my service in the RKKA Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze and in the RKKA General Staff Academy, for outstanding pedagogical work I received a number of commendations in the academy orders and a number of monetary awards.

During my service in the RKKA and my work in the academies, I carried out scientific research. The list of works and articles is to be found in the appendix. In taking an active part in the work of Osoaviakhim [Society for Assistance to the Defense, Aviation and Chemical Construction of the USSR] and Avtodor [Society for Furthering the Development of Automobilism and Road Improvement], I was awarded by Osoaviakhim the Insignias "Shock Worker" and "Activist."

During my service in the Ukraine, I was elected an Honorary Red Armyman of the 4th Combat Engineer Model Battalion.

During the Civil War the party organization of the Directorate of Chief of Engineers of the Eastern Front accepted me in the group of sympathizers of the VKP(b). The commissar of the 6th Military Field Construction in 1918 proposed that I submit a request for admission as a member of the VKP(b). The application was not submitted due to the frequent change in the place of service.

At present, the party organization of the RKKA General Staff Academy has accepted me in the group of sympathizers of the VKP(b). I have not joined any other parties.

I have never been a member of the Trotskyite, rightist, national-chauvinistic and other counterrevolutionary organizations.

I have never had any doubts as to the correctness of the general line of the VKP(b) and have never had any hesitations.

I have never served in the White armies, in the armies of the interventionists or in the anti-Soviet nationalistic armies.

I was never a prisoner of the Whites and interventionists. I did not live on territory occupied by the White and interventionists.

I did not work against the Tsarist government. I participated in the Civil War against the Whites. I was not involved with the underground organizations and individual bolshevik revolutionaries. In line with persecution by the Tsarist government of my brother Vladimir for revolutionary work, I was deprived of the opportunity to study in the cadet corps at state expense, I studied at my own expense, and this created difficulties for me

and my family. The threat of being remanded to the court over an accusation of agitation among the soldiers forced me to leave military service in 1906.

I have not been on any official missions or resided abroad.

I have not been condemned by the bodies of Soviet power.

1 December 1938

Deputy Chief of the Chair of Tactics for
Higher Combined Units for Engineer Troops
Divisional Commander Karbyshev

Ioakim Ioakimovich Vatsetis

Ioakim Ioakimovich Vatsetis (1873-1938), a Soviet military leader. He completed the General Staff Academy (1909). He participated in World War I as a colonel. In commanding the 5th Latvian Zemgal Rifle Regiment, along with the personnel he came over during the October Revolution to the side of Soviet power. During the Civil War he held a number of command positions in the Red Army. From September 1918 through July 1919, he was the commander-in-chief of the Republic Armed forces. From 1921 he was involved in teaching work at the RKKA Military Academy and was an army commander 2d rank. He perished in 1938 during the repressions. He was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

I was born in 1873 on 11 November. My father was a hired hand on Neuhoof Estate, Courland Province, Goldingen District. Our family was large: father, mother, eight children, a grandfather and two grandmothers. The poverty of the family forced all the children to work from an early age for our grub. I personally from the age of 6 was turned over to the shepherds. In the Baltic they had introduced compulsory instruction for children of all classes. I attended the volost [rural district] school from the age of 8 to 15 so that in the summer I earned my keep and in the winter (from 15 October to 15 April of the following year) I studied. With the assistance and support of a people's teacher from Neuhoof volost, Lasis, I succeeded in moving to the town of Goldingen and entering the school of the Ministry of Public Education. Since my parents could not support me, I had to work simultaneously with my studies at a match factory. During the winter the factory allowed me to work at home and in the summer I worked actually at the factory at a machine. The work at the factory was extremely difficult, from 0600 hours in the morning until 0700 hours in the evening minus 2 hours for breakfast, dinner and lunch (that is, an 11-hour workday). I was paid 40 kopecks a day. The hard work made me ache terribly in all my bones and muscles and my hands were covered solid with blisters and calluses. The cruel, inhumane exploitation aroused in me a feeling of hate for the exploiters and forced me to take my first early steps of protest, namely: with the help of two other comrades I

began publishing an underground newspaper which we distributed among the students and seminarians. In 1891, I volunteered for military service in the Riga Junior Officer Battalion where I studied for 2 years. In 1893-1895, I served in Vilno in the 105th Infantry Regiment as a junior officer. In 1895-1897, I served as a junker in the Vilno Junker Infantry School which I completed in the first group, in 1897-1906, I served as a junior officer in various regiments and prepared to take the exams for the General Staff Academy. I entered the General Staff Academy in 1906 and completed it in 1909 in the first class, but without assignment to the General Staff. In 1912, I was promoted to lieutenant colonel for excellence in service. In 1914, I entered the war as commander of a battalion in the 102d Infantry Vyatka Regiment. I was severely wounded. In 1915, I was appointed commander of the 5th Latvian Rifle Battalion and in 1916, the commander of this regiment.

During the 1917 October Revolution the Revolutionary Committee of the Latvian Rifle Division appointed me commander of the 2d Latvian Rifle Brigade. In November the Revolutionary Committee of the 12th Army appointed me commander of a detachment for eliminating the Kerensky followers and the troops and staff of the 12th Army which had remained loyal to them. At the end of November 1917, by the commander-in-chief, Comrade Krylenko, I was appointed the commander of the 12th Army, but after several days in this post, I was summoned to Mogilev where I moved on 12 December 1917. I was appointed chief of the Operations Directorate of the Revolutionary Field Staff and this post I held until 18 February 1918. Along with carrying out these duties I had to organize armed forces from the Red Guard: 1) for the Gomel Front to combat Petlyura; 2) on the Rogachev Front for a war against the rebel Gen Dowbor-Musnicki, the commander of the Polish corps. At the end of December 1917, with the departure of Comrade Krylenko to Leningrad, I was temporarily appointed the supreme commander-in-chief.

On 13 January 1918, I was appointed the commander-in-chief of all the Red Guard troops fighting against the commander of the rebel Polish corps, Gen Dowbor-Musnicki. In major battles on 18 January in the area of Toshchitsa Station and Nizhn, Toshchitsa Village and on 28-30 January in the area of Rogachev, Gen Dowbor-Musnicki was defeated by us and pushed back to Bobruysk. By these victories of the Red Guard an important line was liberated between Poltava—Gomel—Rogachev—Vitebsk and which could supply food to the starving north.

At the beginning of the German intervention, the facilities of Mogilev were evacuated to Orel where I was summoned on 22 February 1918 and put in charge of a commission of nine and made up of representatives from the Central Committee, the field forces, the navy and the revolutionary field staff for combating the German intervention.

Upon return to Moscow, I was in command of all the units of the Latvian Rifle Corps. I was appointed to this position by an order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of 18 December 1917.

By an order of the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs of 13 April 1918, all the Latvian rifle units were organized into the Latvian Soviet Rifle Division with a nine-regiment organization; by the same order of the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs I was appointed commander of the Latvian Soviet Rifle Division and on 6 and 7 July 1918, during the suppression of the Moscow Trotskyite SR revolt I led the troops which had remained loyal to the leader of the proletarian revolution V.I. Lenin.

On 10 July 1918, I was appointed by the SNK the commander-in-chief of the Eastern Front, where under my direct leadership we defeated the troops of the Czech White Guard military bloc on the Middle Volga and for this I was moved to the General Staff and on 2 September 1918, by the Plenum of the VTsIK [All-Russian Central Executive Committee] I was elected the commander-in-chief of all the Armed Forces of the USSR (then the RSFSR).

On 8 July 1919, by a decree of the SNK I was released from the position of commander-in-chief.

In November 1919, I was appointed for particularly important assignments of the RVSR [Republic Revolutionary-Military Council] as chairman of the commission for investigating questions related to converting to a militia system of national defense and at the same time was appointed a regular instructor at the RKKA Military Academy.

In 1922, I entered the First Moscow State University as a student on the legal faculty.

In 1925, I was elected an honor student at the First Moscow State University.

In 1927, I received the title of professor for the chair of military art and military history.

In 1929, I was appointed the leader for the chair for world war.

In 1932, I was appointed the leader of the military history series.

In 1929, I was elected a member of the Moscow Soviet from the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze.

30 April 1933 Moscow Prof I. Vatsetis

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Histories of Regiments of Russian Army
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[Article, published under the heading "Scientific Papers and Information," by L.V. Belovinskiy, candidate of historical sciences, docent: "The Histories of Regiments of the Russian Army"]

[Text] One of the prominent 19th Century military historians A.A. Pisarev affirmed: "We cannot help but hope for great consequences if a history were to be published for each regiment."¹ The preserving of military traditions and the role of the history of troop units in this were even more soundly supported by the then well-known writer and former hussar V. Krestovskiy: "The absence of long-serving soldiers...has served in more than one regiment as the reason for the loss...of traditions.... The succession of combat spirit and dedication should be maintained no matter what the cost. Each soldier comprising a separate unit should respect it, he should be proud of belonging to it and for this he should be full of its fighting spirit, assimilate its dedication and know the chronicle of its fighting life. What in previous times was achieved automatically with the aid of long-serving veterans who are almost impossible in regiments with universal military service (as a consequence of the shortening of the period of service.—L.B.) should now and in the future be achieved by history."² The same idea has been set out in many official documents. Thus, the well-known Russian military leader, Gen M.D. Skobelev, in instructions on the IV Army Corps in 1879 pointed out that the regimental histories serve "as a means for maintaining the honor and glory of the unit" and from them "those presently serving gain love and affection for their unit and zeal for feats in future wars."³

The start to regimental historiography was made by the "Table-Chronicle" for the history of the Life Guard Semenovskiy Regiment established in 1810 by the prominent figure in the area of military sciences, Maj Gen N.M. Sipyagin. In 1811, the VOYENNYI ZHURNAL, No. 13, published a "Detailed Information on the Life Guard Semenovskiy Regiment" written by an officer from this regiment, the already mentioned A.A. Pisarev. In 1817, this work under the title "Voyennyye zamechaniya i pisma, naiboleye otnosyashchiesya k nezabvennomu 1812 godu i posleduyushchim" [Military Comments and Letters Relating Most to the Unforgotten Year of 1812 and the Following" was re-edited along with the book "Voyennaya istoriya ili pokhody grenaderskikh polkov" [Military History or Campaigns of the Grenadier Regiments]. In 1816, upon the initiative and with the support of A.A. Arakcheyev there was published "Kratkoye nachertaniya istorii grenaderskogo grafa Arakcheyeva polka c 1808 po 1815 god" [Brief Essay on the History of the Grenadier Regiment of Count Arakcheyev from 1808 to 1815]. This was written by the regiment's commander B.Ya. Knyazhnin, having been

accompanied by biographies of the staff and senior officers of the grenadier regiment of Count Arakcheyev "who laid down their lives...in the engagements of 1812, 1813 and 1814."

According to our estimates, from the first half of the 19th Century around 50 volumes of regimental histories have been published. Their mass publishing began in the 1860s. Gradually this increased. At the end of the 1890s and at the beginning of the 20th Century, the largest number of unit histories came out. According to incomplete data, by 1817, around 650 different types of publications of regimental historiography taking up over 750 volumes were published. All the guards units had several publications and over 200 volumes were published as a total about the guards. They published histories of the grenadier regiments, a majority of the infantry and rifle regiments and battalions as well as a significant portion of the cavalry and Cossack.

Regimental historiography attracts attention not only in the significant volume but also in the diversity and richness of content and often in the uniqueness of the materials included in it. Many of the publications have drawn on sources presently scattered through the archives as well as materials lost and disappeared for many years. Around one-half of the works by P.O. Bobrovskiy come with appendices for reference material or are references while such works as "Istoriya leybgvardii Preobrazhenskogo polka" [History of the Life Guard Preobrazhenskiy Regiment" (St. Petersburg, 1900-1904) "Istoriya leyb-gvardii Ulanskogo Yeya V. polka" [History of Her Majesty's Life Guard Ulan Regiment] (St. Petersburg, 1903) and "Istoriya 13-go Erivanskogo grenaderskogo polka" [History of the 13th Erivan Grenadier Regiment] (St. Petersburg, 1892-1898) have even two volumes of appendices which provide the combat lists of the regiments, lists of commanders and officers with biographic data, officers and soldiers who were given combat decorations, killed and wounded, information on changes in weaponry and uniforms, the decorating of units or other documents.

Thus, "Istoricheskiy ocherk 5-y baterii leyb-gvardii 1-y artilleriyskoy bragady" [Historical Essay of the 5th Battery of the Life Guard 1st Artillery Brigade] by A.A. Yakomovich and N.A. Ilkvich (St. Petersburg, 1898) contains a list of officers with an indication of origin, family status, education, place of birth, and stages of service. A number of units had special publications in the form of lists of officers, for example "Sbornik biografii kavalergardov" [Collection of Biographies of Cavalry Guardsmen] in four volumes (St. Petersburg, 1901-1908) or "Spisok nizhnikh chinov—Georgiyevskikh kavalerov Gvardeyskogo ekipazha" [List of Junior Officers Who Are Holders of the Medal of St. George of the Guard Team] by Ye. Arens (St. Petersburg, 1891) with a description of the feats of those decorated. The numerous albums for uniforms, colors, insignias and so forth, for example, "Risunki form

odezhdy, voorzheniya i znamen layb-gvardii Semenovskogo polka" [Drawings of Uniforms, Weapons and Colors of the Life Guard Semenovskiy Regiment] (Parts 1-2, St. Petersburg, 1852-1854) are of great interest, supplementing the well-known work of A. Viskovatov on the given problem.

Thus, the regimental histories are not only a fact of history for military history science but also an important source. They frequently contain very curious information. For example, there is a list of officers of the Life Guard Pavlovskiy Regiment which contains rather many names of soldiers from recruits who were given officer ranks during the time of the campaigns of 1812-1814 when the regiment was an army grenadier unit. There are also interesting materials on the changes in uniform. For example, the Pavlovskiy uniform was considered extremely impractical while at the same time the "Istoriya leyb-gvardii Yegerskogo polka" [History of the Life Guard Chasseur Regiment] (St. Petersburg, 1896) gives a "Table of Uniforms, Ammunition and Weapons" from whence it is clear that the clothing was made with an extra seam making it possible in the winter to wear sweaters under the uniforms and this was not permitted for servicemen in the 19th Century. Of particular interest is the appendix to the "Istoriya leyb-gvardii Finlyandskogo polka" [History of the Life Guard Finnish Regiment] of S.A. Gulevich (Vol 5, St. Petersburg, 1909) which contains documents on the events of 14 December 1925, the explosion in the Winter Palace of 5 February 1880, as well as the regiment's participation in suppressing the "disorders" of 9 January 1905 in St. Petersburg and 19 July of the same year in Kronstadt.

In a number of instances the documentary accuracy was a consequence of direct orders from the military superiors. Thus, in 1879, under orders for the Guards Corps and St. Petersburg Military District it was demanded that they collect and systematize all documents concerning the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. As a continuation of this order the unit commanders were sent out an instructional letter containing a list of questions which were to be taken up without fail in the chronicles. Since these chronicles were to be used as aids for conducting field exercises, it was ordered that they contain information on the instructions and actions in combat, on bivouac, during the march of the units up to a regiment inclusively and sometimes the platoons, parties and patrols, to give the results of the action of fire, its range, the nature of its control and so forth.⁴

The typology of the regimental histories is extremely diverse. Some of these publications were designed for officers, others for soldiers and still others for both simultaneously. They can be divided into three categories: works of a general nature, without the quoting of documents and reference to sources; works of a higher scholarly level using documents and references to them; publications with extensive auxiliary scholarly tools in the form of appendices.

In terms of the method of printing there are printed and lithograph, in terms of genre there are table-chronicles, chronicles of combat life, abridged or full histories, collections of materials on history, reference and picture publications. Generally involved in the writing of the histories of the regiments were officers and generals who had served in them. Usually the commander of a regiment by his order could assign any subordinate who was inclined to cooperate or who possessed good style to write a history of the unit. Only a few became professional historians. Among them was A.V. Viskovatov, the author of the widely known work on the history of Russian troop uniforms and who also wrote the histories of the 38th Infantry and Life Guard Izmaylovskiy and Cavalry Guard Regiments. P.O. Bobrovskiy, V.A. Potto and A. Grigorovich each wrote several works.

Contemporaries saw the shortcomings of the regimental histories. Even the first reviewer of them, M.I. Semevskiy, proposed the criteria for evaluating such works. He felt that they should "outline external actions, vividly characterize the internal life in the various ages of existence; they should take up the most significant years and personalities; they should show the involvement in one or another change; they should provide information on the spirit of the regiment and the relations of the various ranks of administration; they should bring out disorders and problems in the regiments as well as errors by individual commands and persons." Of many regimental histories, Semevskiy wrote that these are "biographies of tunics, breeches, trousers, boots, hats and so forth" and as for combat history, here one sees only a sugary superimposition more or less closely following the text of the works of A.I. Mikhaylovskiy-Danilevskiy, a "glorious fabler of ancient times."⁵ In writing a history the reviewer demanded that they make use of archival materials, publish authentic documents and give references to the sources. Other reviewers also demanded that the regimental historiography be based on documents and science, provide references as well as a lively and thorough description of the life.

In 1880, a debate broke out in the press over the question of regimental histories. A.N. Markgrafskiy in the article "On the Question of Compiling the History of Regiments"⁶ rebuked many authors for being overly infatuated with the external aspects (describing parades, holidays and uniforms) and neglecting the inner life of the units. He proposed that wider use be made of court trials, memoirs, soldier songs and other documents, that they describe the everyday life of the regiment, depict the level of discipline, the system of regimental administration, the degree of education of the soldiers, the cost of their upkeep, misdeeds and punishments, that is, provide a complete and just picture. Markgrafskiy was indignant over the desire of certain historians to conceal the shadowy aspects of the past and demanded that both the bad and good aspects of the past be treated with equal accuracy and completeness, otherwise the work would lose any historical value. In answering him, one of the participants in the debate wrote that first of all it was

essential to provide materials on heroic feats, to observe combat traditions, "leaving the dross of the everyday"; it was essential to incite the soldiers to new feats. The truth consists in not thinking up feats but rather making certain that they are based on documents.⁷ Thus, two viewpoints on the nature of regimental histories were established. At the beginning of the 20th Century during the next discussion of the given problem in the press, Gen P.A. Bobrovskiy wrote: "History for indoctrinational purposes should not be a panegyric which often does more harm than good."⁸

Thus, the examined range of military history literature is an aggregate of important, sometimes no longer existing sources and can be used as an unique type of historical document. It contains a large amount of scholarly material on the history of Russia and is an independent historiographic genre providing a notion of the process of development in Russian military historiography for the 19th and the beginning of the 20th Centuries.

Footnotes

1. A. Pisarev, "Voyennye zamechaniya i pisma, naibol'ye otnosyashchiesya k nezabvennomu 1812 godu i posleduyushchim" [Military Comments and Letters Relating Most to the Unforgettable Year of 1812 and Following], St. Petersburg, 1817, p 35.

2. V. Krestovskiy, "Istoriya 14-go Yamburgskogo gusarskogo polka" [History of the 14th Yamburg Hussar Regiment], St. Petersburg, 1872, pp IX-XII.

3. M. Sokolovskiy and S. Gulevich, "Regimental Historiography in Its Gradual Development," VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY SBORNIK, No 1, 1912, p 36.

4. Ibid., pp 28-30.

5. M. Semevskiy, "Regimental Historiography," RUSSKIY INVALID, Vol 2, No 10-11, 1874, pp 262, 266, 268.

6. RUSSKIY INVALID, No 230, 1880.

7. M. Sokolovskiy and S. Gulevich, op. cit., pp 34, 36.

8. P.O. Bobrovskiy, "Histories of Regiments of Russian Army," RUSSKIY INVALID, No 84, 1901, p 6.

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On Strategem

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[Review, published under the heading "Criticism and Bibliography," by S.P. Isaykin, member of the Commission for Military Artistic Literature of the Moscow Division of the RSFSR Writers' Union, of the Book "Voyennaya khitrost v istorii voyn" [Strategem in the History of Wars], by V.N. Lobov, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1988, 192 pages]

[Text] Soviet military researchers have written numerous popular pamphlets on military boldness, resourcefulness and tactical strategem. However, none of them has examined the entire range of problems involved in strategem. Quite recently Voenizdat published the book by V.N. Lobov "Voyennaya khitrost v istorii voyn" [Strategem in the History of Wars].

In a comparatively small (6 printers sheets) popular scientific edition, the author brings out the essence of strategem and shows its role in the military art of military leaders in the wars of the past and present.

The book is designed for Soviet Army officers and a broad range of readers interested in military history.

Strategem has always been an object of attention for military leaders, commanders and military theorists. Its importance has been pointed out by the founders of Marxism-Leninism. The examples given in the book from the history of wars from ancient times to the present show that the effectiveness of strategem in the plans and decisions of the commanders and military leaders as well as in the course of combat depends upon the level of their overall and military knowledge, the knowledge of the enemy and its weapons, the ability to skillfully employ weapons and combat equipment, upon a knowledge of the procedures and methods for conducting combat and an operation, and the ability to consider the terrain, the weather and time of actions, to predict the course of events, as well as upon the ability to think creatively and organize the victorious actions of one's troops.

At present, in the definition of the concept of "strategem" there are substantial contradictions which are explained chiefly by an insufficient study of this question. Having systematized and generalized the judgments of various authors, V.M. Lobov gives his own formulation of this concept: "...By strategem in military art one must understand the theory and practice of concealment and confusion of the enemy" (p 27). The quoted definition, in essence, has been given for the first time in literature dedicated to military art. One cannot help but agree with the author as he has drawn his conclusion having studied and generalized extensive factual material and archival documents excerpts of which are given in the book.

The systematization of the extensive and complex military history material has demanded from V.N. Lobov a definite periodization of all military history as well as of individual wars, campaigns, operations, engagements and battles. It is quite natural that he devoted almost one-half of the work to examining the questions of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Also analyzed were combat actions in other theaters of World War II. The well-written pages about the Great Patriotic War emphasize the generalship art of MSUs G.K. Zhukov, A.M. Vasilevskiy, I.S. Konev, K.A. Meretskov, K.K. Rokossovskiy, R.Ya. Malinovskiy and F.I. Tolbukhin, Gens N.E. Berzarin, P.S. Rybalko and other prominent military leaders of the Soviet Army and their ability to deceive the enemy. The book is full of accurate and memorable descriptions of battles and has been illustrated with colored diagrams.

In describing battle scenes, the author presents to the reader the characters and military skill of the military chiefs, and investigates the evolution of the methods of waging wars, operations and battles, and discloses the general and particular laws of armed combat from the viewpoint of employing strategem.

V.N. Lobov takes up in detail the reasons for the failures of the English troops in 1942 in the fighting in North Africa and the failures of the American troops in the Ardennes in 1944, relating these to the employment of strategems by the German Command. Examples of strategem are given by the author also in analyzing modern local wars: in Korea in 1950, in Vietnam, the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, the armed conflict between England and Argentina in the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands (1982) as well as in the invasion of Grenada by the U.S. Army.

The book is thought-provoking and provides grounds for reflection, it enriches the reader with extensive and at times rare factual material, that is, it increases his knowledge in the area of military art. In our opinion, it is a very important aid for all concerned with studying the history of wars and military art. The book has been written in a good literary tongue.

The work by V.N. Lobov is timely and pertinent. It will aid the commanders of the USSR Armed Forces in better studying the procedures of strategem by probable enemies and oppose them with our own strategem.

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Index of Articles Published in 1988

00010005n Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 88 (signed to press
23 Nov 88) pp 92-96

[Annual Index for articles published in VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in 1988]

[Text]

[Issue No]

EDITORIALS

- V.N. Lobov—The Strategy of Victory 5
- Remember the Lessons of History. Strengthen Combat Readiness in Every Possible Way 6
- Friendship of the Soviet Peoples—A Most Important Source of Our Victories 7
- V.P. Khrobostov—Indoctrinate in Revolutionary and Military Traditions 8

TOWARD THE 19TH ALL-UNION PARTY CONFERENCE

- A.I. Makunin—CPSU Leadership—Basis of Might of Soviet Armed Forces 3
- N.N. Azovtsev—V.I. Lenin—The Founder of Soviet Military Science 4
- N.N. Kalinin, A.V. Khromov—Military Combat Work of the Bolshevik Party (1903-1917) 4
- General Party Conferences and Military Questions ... 4

TOWARD THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES

- A.A. Demidov—The Greatest Possible Strengthening of One-Man Command and Military Discipline 1
- N.F. Shestopalov—Soviet Construction Troops 1
- Created by V.I. Lenin, Fostered by the Party 2
- A.F. Inyakov and V.P. Maslov—The Military Legal Views of M.V. Frunze 2
- V.N. Maltsev—The Military Activities of the Labor and Defense Council Headed by V.I. Lenin 2
- R.A. Savushkin—Genesis and Development of Soviet Military Doctrine 2
- P.T. Tilchin—On Logistic Support for the Revolutionary Troops and Naval Forces 2

SOVIET MILITARY ART

- M.I. Golovnin—The Lessons of Two Operations 1
- G.F. Krivosheyev—Preparation of Trained Reserves for the Soviet Army in the Prewar Years and During the Great Patriotic War 1
- L.M. Shishov and L.N. Pakhnin—Ground Attack Air Operations in Mountains 1

V.A. Vavenko—Cooperation of Tank Armies With Combined-Arms Field Forces	1
M.A. Vilinov—Features of Toropets-Kholm Offensive Operation	1
V.P. Krikunov and V.G. Matveyev—From the Experience of Army Defensive Operations	2
I.Ye. Krupchenko—The Preparation and Conduct of Operations to Encircle and Eliminate Large Enemy Groupings	2
V.D. Danilov—Organization of Strategic Leadership of Soviet Armed Forces (1917-1920)	3
A.S. Knyazkov—Partisan Raids	3
V.A. Kumskov, V. M. Zaretskiy—Cooperation of Ground Troops With Attack Formations	3
A.P. Maryshev—Breaching Enemy Defenses	3
S.N. Mikhalev—Offensive of Second Belorussian Front in Polesye	3
V.I. Ulyanov—Development of Theory of Offensive Combat In Depth in Prewar Years	3
V.V. Kulikovskiy—Fortified Areas in the Civil War ..	4
V.I. Piratov, R.P. Filippov—Artillery Support for Commitment of Front Mobile Groups to the Engagement (Breakthrough)	4
A.A. Sokolov—Combating Enemy Operational Reserves in Offensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War ..	4
A.P. Antonov—Operations Directorate of the General Staff in the Years of the Great Patriotic War	5
V.V. Anuchin—Strikes of Long-Range Aviation Against Enemy Airfields	5
S.P. Ivanov—On Cooperation of Combat Arms in Offensive Combat	5
A.I. Yevseyev—The Influence of the Experience of the Great Patriotic War on Certain Questions in the Organizational Development of the Armed Forces	5
P.D. Alekseyev—A Rifle Division Offensive in the Mountains	6
A.G. Pervov and Lt Col V.N. Guskov—Night Operations of Frontal Aviation	6
V.N. Andrianov—International Aid of the Soviet Partisans to the Anti-Nazi Movement in the Central and Southeastern European Countries	7

S.L. Mitin—The Ship Patrol Service of the Baltic Fleet in the War Years	7
S.I. Postnikov—Development of Soviet Military Art in the Kursk Battle	7
V.P. Vorobyev—Submarine Combat Operations in the Black Sea Fleet in 1943-1944	7
V.V. Anuchin, O.N. Zdorov—Genesis and Development of the Theory of Combat Employment of Air Forces (1917-1938)	8
A.S. Gusev—The Development of Defensive Combat Tactics During First and Second Periods of the Great Patriotic War	8
S.K. Yermilov—Air Operations to Thwart Operation Brazil	8
V.V. Gurkin, M.I. Golovnin—Operations in Battles ..	9
A.I. Ismailov—Both Russians and Non-Russians	11
P.T. Kunitskiy—If the Defenses Are Breached...	12

MILITARY ECONOMICS AND REAR SERVICES

F.F. Gusarov, L.A. Butakov—Technical Cover for the Railroads	4
F.I. Komarov—Improving the Military Medical Service During the Years of the Great Patriotic War	8
P.P. Butkov, V.V. Shmidt—Particular Features of Rear Support in Mountain Desert Terrain	9

PARTY-POLITICAL WORK

P.N. Chuyko—Certain Features of Work in Long Range Aviation Formations, Units	3
B.F. Panteleyev—Certain Features of Party-Political Work on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War	6
M.P. Demin—Particular Features of Party-Political Work in the Kursk Battle	7
A.A. Beletskiy, A.F. Vakarov—Components of Victory ..	9
V.A. Tsarkov—Without a Lull or Respite	11

DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES

Yu.G. Perechnev—On Certain Problems of Readying the Nation and the Armed Forces for Repelling Nazi Aggression	4
---	---

V.I. Belyayev—Strengthening the Security of the USSR Western Frontier on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War	5
A.G. Khorkov—On the Eve of Momentous Events ...	5
M.M. Kiryan—The Initial Period of the Great Patriotic War	6
G.P. Pastukhovskiy—Deployment of the Operational Rear in the Initial Period of the War	6
P.T. Kunitskiy—Restoring the Breached Strategic Defensive Front in 1941	7
B.N. Petrov—Military Operations on the Northwestern Sector in the Initial Period of the War	7
A.A. Gurov—Combat of Soviet Troops on the Southwestern Sector in the Initial Period of the War	8
B.G. Krokhmalyuk, V.G. Oppokov—The Great Patriotic... ..	9
P.V. Maltsev—Who Is to Blame?	10
V.P. Krikunov—Where Did the Tanks Go?	11
The Baltic Republics: 1939	12

MILITARY LEADERS AND CHIEFS

S.P. Ivanov—MSU M.V. Zakharov	8
-------------------------------------	---

MASTERY AND HEROISM

I.I. Kartavtsev—Regiment Offensive Under Winter Conditions	3
F.K. Gavrikov—To the Southeast of Orel	7

MEMOIRS AND ESSAYS

M.M. Bondar—In Headwaters of Velikaya River	3
N.G. Lyashchenko—2d Assault Army in Combat for Motherland	3
V.A. Poleshchuk—A Year of Silence	5
D.I. Osadchiy—From the March Into Battle	6
S.Ye. Popov—Even Then Victory Was Being Prepared For	6
R.G. Umanskiy—In Days of Peace and War	6
I.G. Dragan—Across the Hills, Tayga and Swamps of Manchuria	8
A.G. Fedorov—The Fiery Ram of Mikhail Krivtsov .	8

V.N. Novikov—Weapons of Air Combat	8
N.G. Pavlenko—Reflections on the Fate of a Military Leader	10, 11, 12
N.D. Saltykov—A Feat	12

LITERARY PAGES

V. Pikul—An Old Story With a New Ending	7
---	---

OUR INTERVIEWS

Interview with V.S. Pikul	1
Seventy Years in Army Service	2
Unforgettable	9
By Strong-Willed Decisions... ..	12

DOCUMENTS AND MATERIALS

From the History of Organizing the Worker-Peasant Red Army	2
Basic Instructions on Strengthening Work in Partisan Movement in the East	3
Decree of RVSR of 8 May 1928	5
Order of the USSR People's Commissar of Defense No. 227 of 28 July 1942	8
An Old But Terrible Weapon (Background of Order No. 270 of 16 August 1941)	9
Two Centers of Danger	10
A Battle Order	11
What Actually Happened?	12

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION LIFTED

L.M. Sandalov—They Stood to the Death ...	10, 11, 12
---	------------

MILITARY SCIENCE: PEOPLE AND PROBLEMS

Ya.M. Gorelik—The Predictions of M.N. Tukhachevskiy	9
---	---

IN THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH

I.I. Kuznetsov—Generals of 1940	10
---------------------------------------	----

VIEWPOINTS, JUDGMENTS AND VERSIONS

S.G. Ishchenko—I Was in a Blocking Detachment ..	11
A.N. Kolesnik—Prisoner of War, Sr Lt Yakov Dzhughashvili	12

I. Pfaff—Prague and the Military Conspiracy Case . 10,
11, 12

MILITARY PEDAGOGICS AND PSYCHOLOGY

B.M. Teplov—The Mind of a Military Leader 1

MILITARY HISTORY WORK IN TROOPS AND VUZes

P.A. Volkov—In the Military Science Society at the
Saratov Officer Club 7

FROM WORLD WAR II

A.F. Bulatov—Combating Airborne Assault Forces ... 4

A.V. Viktorov—U.S. Strategic Troop Movements 5

G.M. Zavarukhin—Employment of Submarines on Sea-
Lanes 6

A.S. Nikolayev—Air Defense of Large American and
Japanese Ship Groupings 7

B.G. Solovyev—The Surprise Factor 9

O.F. Suvenirov—"Klim, Koba Said..." 12

LOCAL WARS

R.M. Portugalskiy—The Disruption of Enemy Troop
Control 1

V.A. Yermakov—Certain Questions in the Develop-
ment of Military Communications Systems of the
U.S. Army 6

R.M. Loskutov, O.I. Latushko—Combat Actions of
Egyptian and Israeli Armies in the Suez Canal Zone in
the 1973 War 10

In the Armies of the Socialist Countries 1, 11

IN THE ARMIES OF THE NATO COUNTRIES

R.G. Kersho Para—We Through the Eyes of Others .
10, 11

AGAINST BOURGEOIS FALSIFIERS OF HISTORY

A.S. Yakushevskiy—The Ideological Conflict Over the
Questions of the History of the Military Intervention
and Civil War in the USSR 4

P.N. Lashchenko—About DIE WELT, LA VAN-
GUARDIA and So Forth 9

A.S. Orlov—Munich: A Shift Toward War 9

SCIENTIFIC PAPERS AND INFORMATION

G.A. Koltunov—The Diorama Museum in Belgorod . 1

A.Z. Lebedintsev—On the Orders of Prerevolutionary
Russia 1

Yu.P. Ushakov—The Results Could Have Been Better...
..... 1

V.A. Ananyev—The Decembrists and the Military Set-
tlements 2

K.I. Kozlovskiy—From the Experience of the Military
Patriotic Indoctrination of Secondary School Students in
1941-1945 2

V.G. Krasnov—The People's Revolutionary Army of the
Far Eastern Republic 2

F.N. Utenkov—The Combat Operations by Units of the
256th and 372d Rifle Divisions in Encirclement 2

L.A. Yakovenko—The Enemy Did Not Get the Ships . 2

B.O. Daynes—Suppression of Kronshtadt Anti-Soviet
Revolt 3

A.A. Chernyshev—The Guards Cruiser "Krasnyy
Kavkaz" 4

V.S. Kutarov—No One is Forgotten, Nothing is Forget-
ten 4

V.M. Mikhaleva—From the History of the Establishing
of a Soviet System of Local Military Headquarters
Bodies 4

A.S. Sherstyuk—Development of the Theory of the
Combat Employment of Air Defense Weapons (1917-
1941) 4

A.M. Valkovich—On Arming the Hussars with Lances .
4

V.P. Zimonin—A Useful Dialogue 4

A.I. Aleksentsev—From the History of the Combat
Activities of the Food Army on the Fronts of the Civil
War 5

S.A. Matsulenko—Military Reforms of Peter I 5

L.M. Parova—Creation and Activities of the Military
History Section of the Staff of the Caucasus Military
District 5

N.I. Murzayev—From the History of Establishing the
Disciplinary Regulations 7

V.G. Zhigalov—A Great Voyage of Small Ships 7

A.S. Sinin—Employment of Mines by Russian Troops on the Lower Danube in 1877	8
G.V. Razhnev, O.V. Nazarova—Warrior Town	9
F.A. Yevlano—The Gold Weapon—A Special Type of Military Decoration	9
R.M. Yusupov, V.P. Ivanov—Mathematical Modeling in Military Affairs	9
I.A. Amosov—XIII International Colloquium on Military History	10
A.A. Kolesnikov—On Indoctrination and Training in the Russian Army	10
A.I. Prokhodchenko—Military History and Modern Times	10
Yu.F. Sokolov—"Obey the Wise..."	11
L.V. Belovinskiy—The Histories of Regiments of the Russian Army	12

CRITICISM AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

G.M. Ivanitskiy—Germany in World War II	1
V.A. Kondratyev—The Searches for the Adzhimushkay Heroes are Continuing	4
V.G. Kolychev, G.P. Bovin—New Works on the History of the Civil War and Imperialist Intervention in the USSR	6
L.G. Ivashov—The History of the Organizational Development of the Soviet Armed Forces After the Great Patriotic War	7
I.A. Panshin, L.D. Chernousko—Star Wars and SDI ..	9
A.P. Khorev—By the Road of Courage	10
S.P. Isaykin—Book Review of "Strategem in the History of Wars" by V.N. Lobov	12

MILITARY HISTORY DATES AND EVENTS

A.V. Aprelkov—Army Cmdr 2d Rank N.D. Kashirin ..	2
V.P. Alekseyev—140th Anniversary of MORSKOY SBORNIK	3
V.F. Yermakov—From History of Soviet-Czechoslovak Military Cooperation	3

A.I. Golyakov—All-Union War and Labor Veteran Organization	5
G.P. Sechkin—The 70th Anniversary of the Soviet Border Troops	5
P.M. Kompaniyenko—70th Anniversary of the Affairs Directorate of the USSR Ministry of Defense	6
I.N. Pavlov—The Legendary Iron [Division]	7
V.O. Daynes—Corps Cmdr A.I. Gekker	8
V.G. Krasnov—Defending Soviet Power	8
N.B. Starov—B.M. Dumenko	8
N.A. Maltsev—The Body of Higher Military Authority in the Nation	9
V.N. Maltsev—The Council of Worker and Peasant Defense	11

Chronicle, Facts, Findings	1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10
Heroes of the Civil War	2
The Age in Autobiographies	12
From Reader Conferences	1, 4, 6, 9, 10
You Ask, We Answer	1, 6, 10, 11
From Editor's Mail	5, 6, 10, 11, 12
Meetings With the Editors	11

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